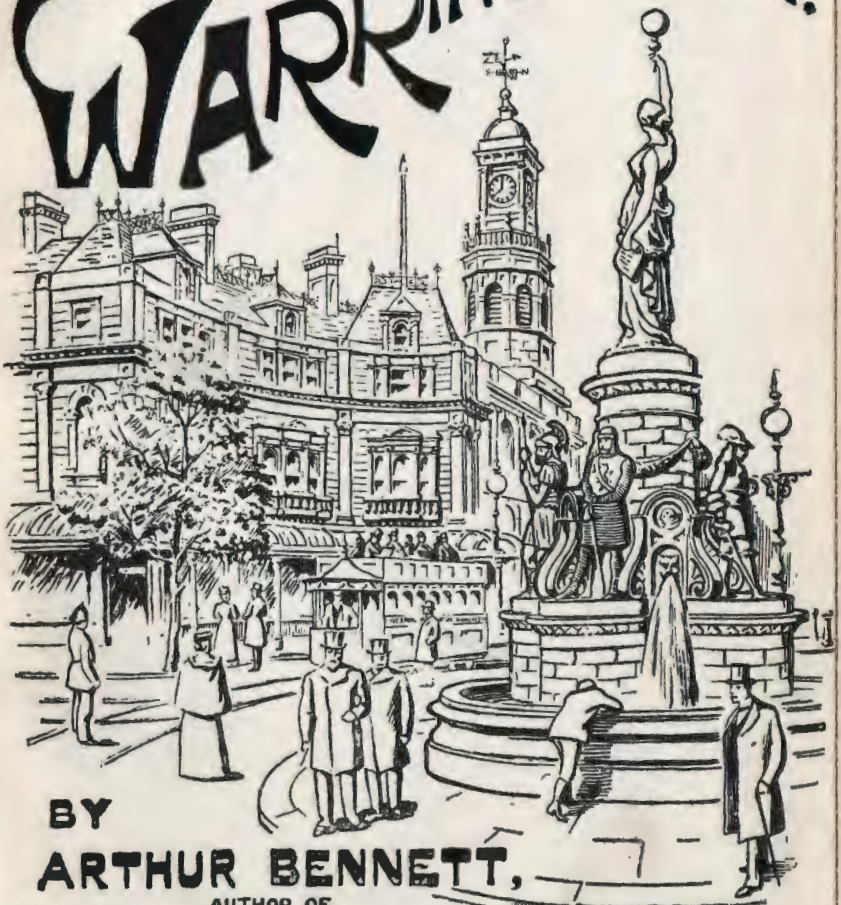
THE DREAM OF A WARRINGTONIAN.



BY
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AUTHOR OF
"THE DREAM OF AN ENGLISHMAN."

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DEDICATION.

To all who love "the good old town"
My dream is humbly dedicated;
To those who bravely seek to crown
Its ancient records, antedated
For close upon two thousand years
Of storm, and strife, and aspiration,
I send, as the new century nears,
This book of bright anticipation.

Its past, 'neath many a changing name,
Was rich in heroes, saints, and sages;
Then let us emulate its fame,
And with fresh triumphs grace its pages,
Until our sons shall see it stand,
Health in its veins, peace in its bosom,
An honour to our English land,
And on the sweet world's breast a blossom.

PREFACE.

THE history of Warrington has never yet been fully and consecutively told. The material is abundant, but it is scattered through a crowd of disconnected books and pamphlets; much of it is only obtainable through the medium of the Reference Library; and, in such a form, it makes but scant appeal except to those of purely antiquarian tastes. Yet it positively teems with interest, and through it move, in shadowy succession, many of the greatest figures of the past. To weave the broken incidents into one continuous story; to seek to make the "dry bones live"; and to endeavour to bring home to its increasing multitude of citizens some real sense of all they owe to the old town of love and service is the object of the present volume.

The recent celebration of the Borough Jubilee has naturally been fertile in suggestion, and the close of the century appears to be a favourable time for "looking backward" with affectionate regret, and "forward" with a hopefulness begotten of experience; for, in the words of William Beamont, our chief local antiquary, "the past is a book filled with lessons to teach the present how to improve the future." We may profit by its mistakes, win inspiration from its achievements, "grow great by" its "example," and deduce, with some assurance, from its stirring pages the main outlines of the age that is to be.

Portions of the volume have already appeared, but in a shape which was not accessible to the general public. It has now been much enlarged and partially re-written, and the facts are based upon the best authorities. In addition to Mr. Beamont, I have carefully consulted Dr. Kendrick (the younger), Mr. John Fitchett

Marsh, Mr. James Edwardson Worsley, and Mr. Thomas May, to the fruits of whose diligent and painstaking researches some future writer will be able to turn with confidence for all the details needed to compile a definitive history. I ought also to particularly mention Mr. Henry A. Bright, author of an interesting "Historical Sketch of Warrington Academy." My occasional indebtedness to other writers is acknowledged in the numerous foot-notes which I have thought it well to introduce as finger-posts to those in search of further information.

In many instances, the descriptions have been authenticated by maps and pictures; and I desire to specially thank Mr. Thomas May for permission to reproduce his map of the Roman Camp at Wilderspool; Mrs. William Beamont, for permission to reproduce "The Trial at the Friary"; Mr. Thomas Birtles for permission to reproduce George Sheffield's picturesque "Cheapside"; and Mr. J. A. Kendrick for several clever

sketches. The other illustrations (with the exception of some capital photographs by Messrs. Thomas Birtles & Son) have been mainly copied from material at the Museum, and I should also like to express my obligations to Mr. Charles Madeley, the Curator and Librarian, for the courtesy with which he has placed the same at my disposal.

Occasionally my authorities differ, and I make no pretence to original research. But, in spite of its imaginative form, the first six chapters of the story are, in all essentials, true; and, according to the best available data, the old town's past was pretty much what I have painted it. May the future correspond as nearly with my dream's auspicious close!

ARTHUR BENNETT.

Warrington,
1st January, 1900.

CORRECTIONS.

In addition to certain obvious typographical errors, due to the rapidity with which the book has been printed, the following mistakes require amendment:

Page 52, line 16, for "plasaunce" read "pleasaunce."

,, 69, ,, 17, ,, "a very curious and careful inventory" read "a detailed inventory."

,, 76, ,, 6, ,, "the people" read "the inhabitants."

,, 82, ,, 10, ,, "the Protector penned" read "Cromwell penned."

,, 104, ,, 5, ,, "stores" read "stories."

,, ,, foot-note 2, for "In Warrington 1780 to 1795" read "In Warrington 1779 to 1795." Even then, however, the dates appear to conflict, for Mr. Beamont states that the Rev. James Glazebrook founded the first Sunday School on Easter Sunday, 1779, and implies that it was founded in Warrington, whilst, in the "Short Sketch of His Life" prefixed to his "Sermons on Various Important Subjects," he is said to have only come to Warrington in *September*, 1779.

,, 106, lines 1 and 2, for "in the small-paned window of one of them" read "in the small-paned windows of the first of them."

Page 109, line 22, for "four steps" read "three steps."

„ 117, „ 22, „ "uncongruous" read "incongruous."

„ 128, lines 11 and 12, to "the longest flight in all the realms of English poesy," add foot-note, "Alfred, a Poem." It is desirable that special attention should be called to this great work of a Warringtonian at a time when we are about to celebrate the Millenary of King Alfred's death.

„ 150, in first foot-note, for "Dr. Aikin's Memoir" read "Memoir by John Aikin, M.D."

„ 169, add foot-note to line 2, "The Invitation."

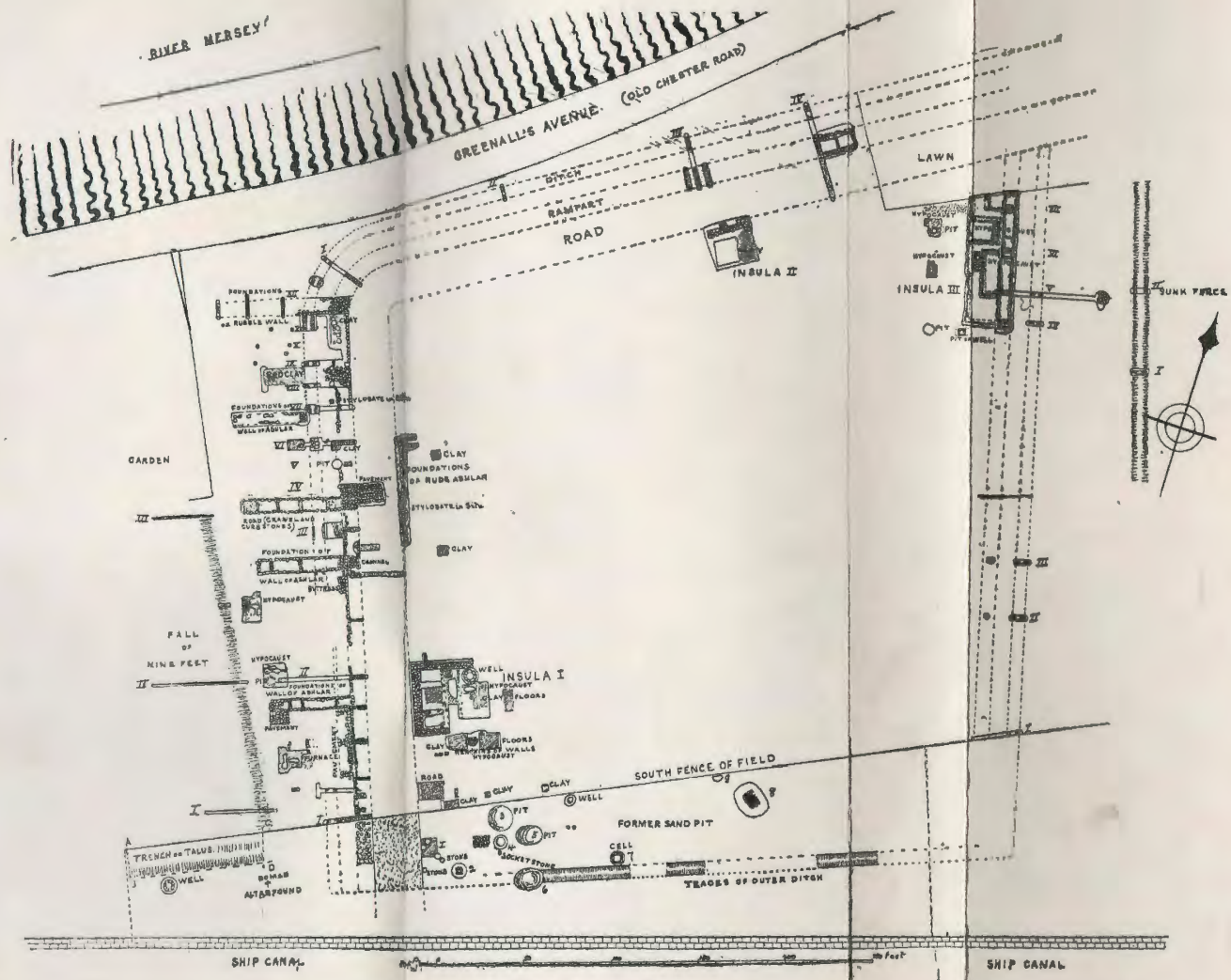
„ 171, line 8, for "(1838)" read "(1848)."

„ 181, „ 3, after "observing," add, "just in front of me, the rugged Cromwell, standing sentinel beside the Bridge where the eventful battle closed; and,"

„ 200, line 4, for "the great Protector" read "the conquering Cromwell."

„ 233 „ 2, „ "this latter building" read "this later building."

Other tautologies and imperfections, which have escaped discovery until it was too late to correct them, the reader is requested to excuse; and the author will be particularly obliged by any information as to matters of fact which will enable him, in any future edition, to improve the volume and throw further light upon the history of the town.



THE ROMAN CAMP.

THE
DREAM OF A WARRINGTONIAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE ROMAN CAMP.

On a golden afternoon in the early autumn, I had wandered out to Wilderspool to examine the excavations which our indefatigable townsman, Mr. Thomas May, was making in the field which adjoins the Brewery upon the west, and lies between the river and the Ship Canal. Quite unexpectedly, I fell in with Mr. May himself, engaged in carefully directing the exertions of an intelligent man who was at work upon a definite series of experimental diggings. Mr. May was good enough to accompany me to the scene of the principal discoveries. He pointed out to me the spot where he had made his earliest finds, showed me a second well which he

had recently exposed, and called my attention to the broken bits of pottery with which the upturned earth in the locality was strewn. But my notice was especially directed to an extensive series of trenches, in which, with the enthusiasm of the genuine antiquary, he indicated the unmistakable traces of a huge and solid wall, running just outside the Roman road which had been partially uncovered. Beyond us was the Brewery; to the left, the residence of Alderman Bolton, nestling in its paradise of orchids; to the rear, the mighty waterway on whose broad bosom ships from every clime were slowly sailing up to Manchester; whilst, just in front of us, across the bend of the old river, and well-nigh hidden in its pall of smoke, lay busy Warrington, absorbed in the pursuit of wealth, and apparently oblivious of the splendours of its shadowy past.

But, as I gazed at it, and then once more directed my attention to the trenches and listened to the words of Mr. May, I thought that I observed a change in the surroundings. The Brewery became enveloped in a silver haze; the houses close at hand in slow succession faded from my view; I lost all traces of the great Canal;

and over "the good old town" I knew and loved so well there seemed to creep an ever-darkening canopy which gradually concealed it from my sight. I was standing on a level upland, gazing out across a broad and pleasant river. To the east, I saw the tiny Lum Brook, running towards it from the Cheshire hills; whilst, to the west, the little Cramond babbled musically on its way to join the larger stream. On the other side the river lay a stretch of level country, and, beyond it, I descried a mighty wood, which swept away into the indefinite distance towards the north and west. Then I saw the traces of a much-frequented military road, descending from the gentle heather-covered slopes in which I recognized Hill Cliff, and crossing the broad heath of which the tongue of land on which I stood was the extremity; whilst, to the right, I saw another, similar in its construction, and converging manifestly in the same direction. Each was straight, and strong, and durable, and admirably calculated to defy the ravages of time. Next, I noticed that great ramparts rose around me everywhere, and found, to my intense surprise, that I was in the middle of a quadrangular enclosure probably three acres in extent, but of somewhat irregular

outline. The ramparts were apparently of rubble, set in clay, with facings rudely smoothed, as though with hammer and chisel. They were nine feet thick, and of proportionate altitude, and, guarding them, I saw, at intervals, the sturdy forms of warriors, picturesquely clad in kilt and tunic, helmeted in bronze, and armed with formidable spears and shields. In the southern wall I noticed a huge gateway, under which the road already mentioned entered the enclosure. In the western wall a second gateway gave admission to the western road, the two uniting just inside the camp.

I looked for Mr. May, and found instead a Roman general, and, in place of his assistant, saw a sturdy Roman soldier standing by my side. From the general I discovered that the southern road ran hither from *Condate* (or Kinderton), passing close to *Salinæ*, "the city of salt," in which I recognized Northwich ; whilst the western led to the city of *Deva* (or Chester), on the River Dee, which was, I found, the headquarters of the Twentieth Legion. The united roads encompassed the enclosure just within the western and the northern walls, emerging

through another gateway on the east, and striking off athwart some marshy land towards a point at which they crossed the river by a ford, and so ran eastward to *Mancunium* (or Manchester), and north to *Coccium*, the venerable ancestor of Wigan, through the land of the Brigantes, to where, at *Uxelodunum* (or Netherport), upon the Solway Firth, a Roman fleet kept ceaseless watch and ward. All round the mighty wall, upon its outer side, there was a berme or platform, possibly nine feet in width, and, bordering this, a ditch, or moat, some six feet wide by three feet deep; each entrance was protected by a strong and solid gate; and above the camp there floated out upon the wind the figure of a boar, the immemorial ensign of the Legion.

Proceeding through the nearest gateway, I perceived that the interior was completely occupied with buildings. Near the centre stood an edifice with some approach to architectural pretensions, in the neighbourhood of which I saw the signs of those who bought and sold. It was scarcely necessary to explain to me that this was the *Forum*, or Market Place. Just at hand,

another building of superior design was pointed out to me as the abode of my companion, whilst several other dwellings of the better class were indicated as the residences of the chief officials of the place. The best of these abutted on the roadway. The remainder of the space enclosed was taken up by buildings of a humbler type, with narrow alleys and eavesdrops intersecting them in all directions. Both the larger and the ruder buildings were one storey high, and generally consisted of extremely stout and well-constructed timber frames, which rose from strong dwarf walls of stone and clay and were substantially filled in with clay and straw. The roofs were, for the most part, formed of hexagonal stone tiles ; and I observed that there was a greenish glass in nearly all the windows, and that the doors were, in many cases, carefully provided with locks and bolts. The bulk of the inhabitants were soldiers, and in their faces I beheld at once the evidences of a conquering race. They were, I found, an *ala*, or wing of cavalry, perhaps three hundred strong, associated with the Twentieth Legion, and permanently stationed here to guard the realm against the fierce invaders from the North, or from the pirates who

from time to time sailed up the rivers of the western coast from the adjacent island of *Hibernia.* The military element predominated in the station, but several of the humbler residences, which were little better than cabins, were inhabited by the natives of the island, who were mostly slaves—mere hewers of wood and drawers of water. Yet, despite their servitude, methought I saw in many of their faces marks of that inherent bravery which, years before, had made great Cæsar and his galleys pause and sail away in awe of those grim warriors, dyed with woad, who thronged the white cliffs of the Kentish coast, and, in their reckless bravery, rushed out amid the waves of the Channel to meet them (B.C. 55).

There was, outside the north-west corner of the camp, a spacious granary, and I speedily detected traces of the armourer and of the smith; sandal-makers, saddlers, and weavers, too, were visible; the baker was, of course, in evidence; and I thought I saw some potters busily engaged in shaping various graceful vessels which were manifestly in continual request. Amongst the natives, I discovered several freedmen, who

were actively engaged in ministering to the necessities of the place, and employed their less fortunate fellow-countrymen as sub-contractors. Of the middle classes, as we know them, I did not discern a trace. There was the official element, haughty, dignified, and exclusive—an impressive type of men; the soldiers—of fine physique and wonderfully disciplined; the freedmen—few in number; and the slaves. Once or twice a litter passed me borne by these, and in it I espied some stately Roman matron, or gazed with admiration at the comely face of some sweet Roman maid. Others of the gentler sex from time to time went by on foot, the major part of them of native origin, and some from foreign realms which had been gradually brought within the all-embracing sway of Rome. But the genuine Romans nobody could possibly mistake. Those proud, cold, regular features; those figures, so stately, yet so graceful, in flowing robes which only emphasized the wearer's loveliness—to whom could they belong but to the daughters of the imperial city? The humbler women of the camp were obviously, for the most part, children of a barbarous realm; but they also did not lack a certain savage charm and

dignity, and many a gallant Roman soldier had been glad to choose a wife from the wild damsels of the conquered race.

At my comrade's invitation, I entered the abode from which the flag was floating. Passing through an outer court, in which I saw an altar reared to Jupiter, "the best and greatest," he led me to an inner court or chamber. The walls were frescoed, and there was a fountain in the centre. Then wine was brought us in a red *ampulla*, from the cellar underneath the house, where it was stored in shapely *amphoræ*, poured out in *pocula* of Samian ware, and courteously handed round; and, as we drank of it, my host told stirring tales of swift and sudden marches, and of desperate struggles with these island-folk; and added that, although they seemed subdued, the smallest spark would kindle them to fierce revolt; and that, from time to time, it had been necessary to employ repressive measures of the sternest character in order to maintain the Roman yoke upon this fertile province. Agricola, he said, had tarried here, "himself selecting the ground for his encamp- **A.D. 79.** ments, and searching and examining

"the estuaries and woods;" and though, before his visit, the Brigantes, in the land beyond the river, had been brought into subjection, or so it seemed, at any moment they might break into revolt again, and [1] *Veratinum*, as the place was called, become the theatre of deadly strife. But, for the present, Rome was quietly proceeding

1 "The historian of Manchester was of opinion that Warrington was the *Varatin* or ford town of the Britons and the *Varatinum* of the Romans, and that the modern name, as pronounced by a vulgar tongue, easily recals the old one. (Whitaker's *Hist. Manchester*. .) . . . On the other hand, we have a great Saxon scholar who would incline us to find another origin of the name of Warrington, and, assigning the foundation of the place to the Væringjar, would derive its name from the Varangians, an early Norman people. (Kemble's *Saxons in England*. . .) . . . Camden, the great father of British antiquaries, says . . . that Warwick has the first syllable of its name from Wæring, *agger*, a mound or wall. (Camden's *Brit*. . .) . . The Norman scribe who penned the account of Warrington for the *Domesday Survey* has called it 'Walintune' as thinking perhaps that it was named from its wall. .Upon the whole, however, with respect to the name of Warrington, we incline to the opinion of the learned editor of *Penwortham Priory*, that the British word 'werid,' *a ford*, is at the root of the first two syllables of the present name of Warrington, and that the word meaning *Ford town*, originating with the Britons, has only assumed its present form in the process of transfusion through the Saxon tongue."—*Annals of the Lords of Warrington, by William Beamont.*

with her mighty task of civilizing those whom she had overcome. The great Agricola had done his best to reconcile the people to their conquerors; had sought to introduce among them something of the laws, and arts, and manners of the country whence he came; and, even now, the Emperor Hadrian was in the north, subduing the rough tribes of Caledonia, and building walls, and making roads, and generally cementing his dominion over all the island. 120.

The ladies of the household, clad in their loose garments, clasped with beautiful bronze *fibulæ*, came in to join us now, and bitterly complained of the unwonted rigours of our northern climate. They spoke enviously, too, of friends who dwelt in some of the more important stations, where not a little of the luxury of the imperial city had been gradually transplanted; of the baths and amphitheatres which other towns could boast; of the stately country villas of the south; and even of the pleasures which attended life in *Deva*, or *Mancunium*. The men could hunt the wolf and boar in the huge forest to the north, or chase the hares upon the neighbouring heath, or catch the fish in the adjacent river, and they had

all the fierce delights of war to stir their blood ; but for the women-folk, well, *Veratinum* was unquestionably dull. But, though they lacked the elegancies of the city on the Tiber, and were doomed to dwell in a small military station in the midst of a wild land, they had brought with them into their place of exile evidences not a few of their high nationhood. Their persons were embellished with quaint beads, and curious bronze bracelets, rings, and brooches. The room in which we sat was warmed by means of an underground furnace ; great vases filled with flowers exhaled a pleasant scent ; and, not only here, but throughout the station, I had noticed numerous pieces of the lovely Samian ware, adorned with heroes, graces, and divinities ; the Durobrivian ware, embossed with hunting scenes; and the plainer black or grayish Upchurch ware, with its simple scheme of geometric ornament, but its unfailing symmetry of form. And, as we drank, the eldest daughter of the household seized a lute, and sang of the high deeds of Rome with such exceeding sweetness that I was fain to hear her sing again.

She readily complied with my request, and

then, at the suggestion of my host, we rambled round the walls of the enclosure, from the top of which I saw the skiffs and galleys lying in the river, and caught an admirable bird's-eye view of the interior, and perceived the numerous dwellings which were springing up towards the south outside the camp. He showed to me, with pardonable pride, some cherry trees which he had planted, to remind him of his loved Campania—the first which had been introduced into the neighbourhood—and afterwards explained that he had also introduced the radish and the pea, the lily and the pæony ; whilst, right against the wall of his own dwelling, I observed a group of rose-trees in full bloom. He likewise specially directed my attention to the admirable wells the place could boast, and showed me, near the southern gate, an altar where the soldier, ere he went upon an expedition, could offer sacrifices to ensure a prosperous journey and a safe return. And, a little way beyond the walls, I saw the sacred spot where lay the ashes of the dead, entombed in lovely vases, and reverently held in memory by the living.

Suddenly I heard the sound of a trumpet. A

body of horsemen was approaching, with pomp of banners and glitter of helmets and of spears. At once the camp was filled with curious excitement. The soldiers seized their arms, and stepped into their places. My comrade, craving my forgiveness, hastened to their head. I saw them swiftly form in glistening lines on either side the road; I watched the slaves emerging from their huts to ascertain the cause of the commotion; and, before I realized the meaning of it all, a roar of acclamation hailed a kingly form who, riding on a noble charger, at this moment passed beneath the eastern gate.

It was the Emperor Hadrian, returning from his expedition to the north, and, at the sight,

> "All Rome sent forth a rapturous cry,
> And even the ranks of Tuscany
> Could scarce forbear to cheer."

But, even as I looked with straining eyes, the scene was changed. I seemed to be transported suddenly to those great eastern lowlands peopled by the fierce Iceni, and before me there arose the shining figure of the dauntless Boa-
61. dicea, their outraged Queen. I heard the blood of her defeated countrymen

cry out for vengeance, and from the lips of the indignant Druid priests, above the tumult and the shouting, I could catch the burning words :

"Regions Cæsar never knew
Thy posterity shall sway,
Where his eagles never flew,
None invincible as they.

* * * * *

"Then the progeny that springs
From the forests of our land,
Armed with thunder, clad with wings,
Shall a wider world command.

* * * * *

"Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
Heaven awards the vengeance due ;
Empire is on us bestowed,
Shame and ruin wait for you!"

And, as the ringing accents died away, I looked towards the camp again. The Emperor and all his train had gone. The warriors, watching on those mighty walls ; the galleys, waiting in that quiet river ; nay, the very walls themselves had disappeared, and scarce one stone was standing on another !

CHAPTER II.

THE NORMAN STRONGHOLD.

I WAS walking eastward, over a rude road which led me right across a lesser heath or common, coming out, at last, in what I took to be Wash Lane, though there was neither house nor edifice of any kind in it, and round it lay great lengths of low and marshy land, exposed apparently to serious floods. And, opposite the further end of this rough thoroughfare, I came, with some astonishment, upon the river. Its course was widely different from that of the malodorous stream which I remembered, for it made a sudden loop or elbow, running eastward from a point exactly opposite the Weir, and then abruptly bending backwards till it once more joined its present course, but forming, in its curious and and abrupt detour, a long peninsula. At the point where I emerged it was evidently fordable, and chafed in eddying circles over the great banks which vainly sought to check its steady

progress to the sea. To-day, the flow of water was but moderate, and I crossed with ease; though, in the wet and stormy weather of which this valley evidently had its share, the current, as a yellow-haired young Saxon toiling in the fields informed me, often rose to such alarming heights as made the passage difficult as well as dangerous. But the good folks who from time to time were forced to wend this way were fain to make the best of it, for there was not any bridge, and, indeed, the population was so sparse, it seemed, that there was little need of one.

Proceeding down the narrow tongue of land, I reached, at last, a point which I should judge to be the lower part of what I knew as Howley Lane; and here I noticed, just in front of me, a curious old wooden church, and, beyond it, to the right, a massive stronghold clearly built to guard the approaches to the ford. It stood upon an oval mound—some fifty yards by forty, perhaps, in area—which rose abruptly, on the south and west, beyond an intervening moat or ditch, to an elevation of three yards or so, but sloped upon the north and east more gently to the park-like land which half encircled it, and which con-

trasted strangely with the low and swampy ground that lay in the direction of the river.

Presently I found a wooden draw-bridge, and was rash enough to stroll across it to a court-yard paved with boulders. I was making towards the entrance to the building just referred to—which was formed of mighty timbers firmly fixed upon foundations of ashlar, and obviously meant to stand a siege—when a foreign-looking man, with brawny limbs and sturdy body, clad from head to foot in mail, and formidably armed, accosted me, and brusquely asked my business. I patched up some excuse which satisfied him—though I noticed that he eyed my costume very curiously—and he at once became communicative. He told me that this strong, rude house—half mansion, half fortress—was the abode of *Paganus de Villers*, a warlike Norman baron stationed here by Roger of Poictou, the Earl of Lancaster, to whom the Conqueror had granted all the land between the Ribble and the Mersey.

My interest was excited keenly by this information, and, waxing bold, I asked if I might visit the interior of the fortress, and learn some-

thing of the baron's mode of life. But *De Villers* was at home, he said, and in a strange ill-humour, and it was as much as his poor head was worth to merely carry in my message. He was good enough, however, to point out to me a deep draw-well, supported by stout staves driven firmly down into the underlying clay, and held in place by posts and transoms, and to conduct me round the parapet which helped to guard the mound, especially upon the southern side ; and he showed me, in an outbuilding, the baron's favourite war-horse, which had thundered with its mail-clad master into many a bloody fight or glittering tournament. Geese gabbled in the court-yard ; swine grunted in the neighbouring bracken ; sheep grazed on the adjacent marshes ; and I noticed deer within the wild and almost treeless park towards the east.

It seemed that *De Villers* had but lately built this rough but serviceable residence, and had, indeed, but lately come to *Walintune*—such was the Norman name—and that a survey had been made of it not long before, and entered in the Doomsday Book. From what my friend remembered of these entries,

1086.

I found that King Edward the Confessor had held *Walintune*, with three *berewicks*, or small manors, and one *hide* of land, which represented such a quantity as might be kept in tillage by six ploughs. To it there belonged some four-and-thirty *drenghs*, or Saxon landowners, who had four-and-thirty manors, which contained some two-and-forty *carucates*—each equal to the tillage of one plough—and one *hide* and a half. Saint Elfin, as the patron saint of the adjoining church was called, possessed one *carucate*, and was subject only to the *Danegeld;* whilst "the whole manor and hundred" paid annually to the king a rent of £14 18s., a sum amounting, in our modern currency, to about £230. But the Conquest had resulted in a "wasting and destruction" of the district. At the time of the survey, the *drenghs* had disappeared entirely, and, except for some few *serfs*, who tended swine and spent their days in other menial offices, the Saxon element had altogether vanished. Seven gallant fellows known respectively as Roger, Tetbald, Warin, Radulf, William, Adelard, and Osmund, were the leading landholders ; and, though the hundred stretched as far as Leigh, the population was but some three hundred and forty, and

the tribute to the king had fallen to £8 per year.

As we watched the wild-fowl soaring to and fro across the marshy land beyond the moat, my comrade told me, piously crossing himself as he did so, that 'twas said that the mound on which we stood was full of dead men's bones; and that, after the great fight at Winwick, some three miles away, between the rival Saxon sovereigns, Oswald, monarch of Northumbria—who had a palace there—and Penda, King of Mercia, in which King Oswald fell (642), the bodies of the slain were buried here, and that the mound was raised to Oswald's memory. He narrated various legends of the battle, and said that some supposed that Oswald's nephew, brave young Elfwin, too, a worthy Saxon Prince who died in warfare by the margin of the Trent (679), had likewise found interment here; and that from him the rude old Saxon church adjoining—the only church in England dedicated to St. Elfin—had derived its name. The church was built of oaken timbers, roughly squared, and was a primitive and humble edifice; but here, for some four hundred years, the lamp of faith had been kept burning, and had not gone out in spite of

all the changes and the turmoil of the time.

My comrade had been now relieved from duty, and went forth into the marshes and the woods with me well on towards Thelwall, where it seemed that Edward the Elder had built "a city," and where some traces of the Saxons still remained. And, as we walked and talked, there surged up in my memory the half-forgotten lines :

[1] "Where by the Mersey's willow'd margent peers
Walintun's forded town and manor seat,
Whose fane, there vow'd to sainted Elfin's name,
Of yore aspires beside the forted mound
* * * * * *
Fronting the pass which Thelwall's watch defends."

The darkness came upon us ere we turned again. I seemed to lose my friend mysteriously, and, when I looked in the direction of *Mote* Hill—for so the adjacent mound was designated, whether from the water which protected it, or as an ancient Saxon seat of justice, I am not prepared to say—I noticed the red glare as of some mighty conflagration ; a sombre cloud of smoke, be-

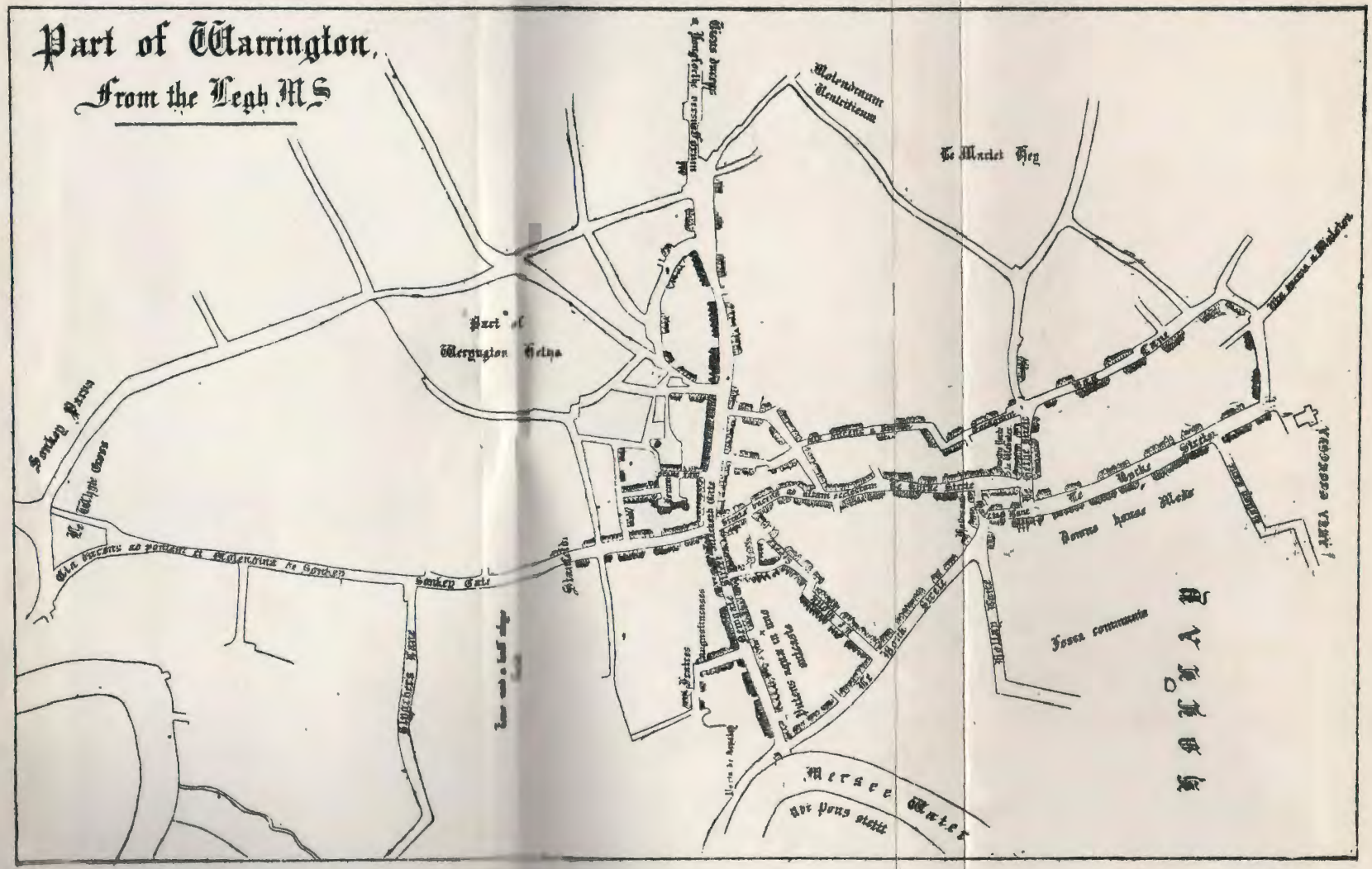
1 "Alfred, a Poem." By John Fitchett. Book 44.

gemmed with multitudes of fiery sparks, went soaring to the stars ; the geese were cackling in intense alarm ; and over all the lower lands great flights of birds went wheeling noisily. Then, above the tumult of this feathered Babel, I could catch the sound of human voices, mingled strangely with the roaring of the fire. Strong hands were seeking to restrain the flames, but, though the moat was full of water, and a gathering knot of weird and warlike figures lent their utmost aid, the conflagration spread, the mighty oaken beams came crashing down, and, ere the sun had lit the east with his diviner flame, the castle on the mound had crumbled into ashes. And then I knew that many moons had waxed and waned whilst I was walking in the woods and marshes ; that, even as I gazed, the years were hurrying by like phantoms ; and that everywhere the scene was changing gradually.

CHAPTER III.

THE HOME OF "THE BLACK FREYRES."

In the gathering light of the new dawn, I speedily perceived that the old timber church had been succeeded by a larger and a statelier edifice of stone. It was in the "decorated English" style of architecture, and probably dated from the days of Edward II. And, now, there were some traces of a settled population, and from the summit of Mote Hill I saw the signs of streets, which ran to east and west and north and south respectively, resembling a huge cross in outline, but irregularly intersected here and there by less important byways whose direction I remembered, though their general aspect was entirely new to me. From a point a little to the northwards of the church a road ran east to *Wulston*, past the mansion of the Bruches; and from St. Elfin's I discovered that a broad and spacious highway known as *Kyrke Strete* led through various picturesque and gabled houses


Part of Warrington.
From the Legh MS
Part of Warrington Heath
Molendinum Nouticum
Le Market Heg
Sankey Parva
Sankey Gate
Mersee Water
Fosse communis

towards a knot of streets and quite a cluster of antique erections in the centre of an evidently very quaint and picturesque old town. I strolled along it—half forgetful of the fact that it was full of ruts and very badly paved—admiring its quaint architecture and its old-world folk, and passed, upon my left, immediately beyond the church, a byway known as *Hollay Lane*, and, on the right, where I remembered Fennel Street, another known as *Hethe Strete*. A short and curving thoroughfare called *Hallus Lane* led towards the centre of the town ; but, at a running spring or fountain at its lower end, I turned abruptly to the left into *Bonck Strete*—such was, I found, the name of Mersey Street, as well as of the present Bank Street—passing, on the right, "the goodly hall" of *William Garnet*, the first local lawyer, who had died, it seemed, some years before, and likewise left behind a goodly reputation. There were houses of the usual type beyond it on this side the street, but only meadows on the left ; and the roadway led me to a new stone bridge of four arches, with a watch-house on the nearest pier ; whilst, underneath, in glassy purity and flecked with foam, there flowed a spacious river called the *Mersee Water*.

A pleasant fellow who was leaning on the balustrades looked up as I approached, and told me that the bridge, as well as the substantial causeway, which led to *Wyllerspool*, the
1495. ancient site of *Veratinum*, had been recently constructed by the Earl of Derby, in order that the Seventh Henry, who had lately passed this way, might get to Lathom House without incurring the undoubted inconveniences and perils of the *Lacheforthe* ford.

I told him that I had but lately crossed by that same ford (at which he fixed his glance upon me very strangely), and said that I supposed that this had been the first attempt to supersede it.

But he answered promptly that so long ago as in the time of Edward Longshanks there had been a bridge, and that on this the *Boydels*, lords of *Gropenhall*, had taken toll for generations; but that it had gradually fallen into disrepair, and that, for years, the townsfolk and the travellers who passed through *Weryngton*—once more the name of the old place had changed—had been compelled to cross the ford, or use the ferry which had supplemented it.

I had no sooner left the bridge and turned towards the centre of the town than I observed a noble range of buildings standing in the midst of pleasant fields and gardens, which apparently extended to the river. They were palpably of the monastic type, and in the midst of them there rose a steeple, crowned with a bell turret. Approaching by a very narrow, but most picturesque and charming street, I passed beneath a great stone gateway, from whose shadow there emerged two shaven friars, attired in black-sleeved coats and large black hoods, the former girt about them by a thong of black leather. They greeted me with a *Benedicite*, and then moved on to ask for alms or to perform some work of charity.

I stepped inside. Another black-robed friar, approaching, asked my business, and, perceiving that I was a stranger, very kindly offered to conduct me through the place. As we proceeded towards the church, he told me that I was now in a religious house belonging to the Hermit Friars —"the black freyres of *Weryngton*," as they were called—and that it had been founded some two hundred years. It owed its origin to a noble

local family, the [1]*Botillers*, who dwelt at *Beausey* —"the fair seat"—a grand old manor close upon two miles away, and who were still the leading benefactors of the place.

We entered the great church, and my companion, with pious pride, directed my attention to the fine proportions of the stately choir, with its stalls and beautiful encaustic tiles, as well as to the beauty of the nave. The windows were ablaze with knightly figures and the arms of many noble families, and amongst them were the arms of Simon de Montfort, whose remains were credibly reported to have healed of their diseases several local pilgrims who had visited his shrine; of the Earl of Lancaster; of the *Botillers*, and the Penketh, and the Bruches, and the Gerards, and the Leghs, and other well-known local families. He pointed out to me that some of them were cleverly repeated in the tesselated pavements of the place. The *Botiller* arms were likewise carved upon the tower, whilst, in the chancel, I was shown an alabaster monument to *Sir William Fitz John de*

1 It will be noticed that there are frequent variations in the spelling of these ancient names.

Boteler, Knight of the Bath. I also noticed speedily the figure of a man carved in wood, cross-legged, and clad in mail, with a shield upon his left arm, and both his hands upon his sword, which was said to be the effigy of *William Fitz Almaric le Botiler*, sheriff of Lancashire, and the founder of the Friary.

The worthy brother led me, next, to the adjacent cloisters—on which the cells of "the black freyres" abutted; to the chapter-house, the refectory, the hall, the gatehouse, the kitchen, the scullery, the bakehouse, the brewhouse, and the dormitories; and, as we went, he told me of the famous scenes of which the Friary had been the theatre, particularly dwelling on the chantries granted, with imposing ceremony, in the presence of a goodly company of neighbouring abbots, priors, and other notables, to Sir Thomas de Dutton, murderer of Michael Poynings, (1379), and to Sir John Bolde of Bolde (1422). Hs gave me, too, a graphic picture of the three days' hearing of the famous case of Scrope *v.* Grosvenor *re* the bearing of the shield *azure* with the bend *or*, which, commencing here, before "Sir William Brombrough, parson of Aldford, Sir John *Botiler*,

baron of Warrington, Sir William Gerard, Knight, and Sir Nicholas *Vernun*, Knight," commissioners who had been specially appointed for the purpose, (1386), was adjourned to Lancaster, and dragged its weary length along three tedious years. He added that a Hermit Friar named Thomas Penketh (whom he well recalled), descended from a family of gentlemen who hailed from the adjacent village of that name, had, after spending several years within these walls, removed to Oxford, won the highest honours of that ancient University, been called to Padua, and there achieved undying fame by issuing the chief works of Duns Scotus. Returning with a mighty reputation to his native land, he had been, it seemed, created Provincial of the Hermit Friars of the Order of St. Augustine in England and Ireland ; but, in 1483, uniting with the famous Randle Shaw in bastardizing the issue of King Edward IV., and raising to the throne the deformed usurper, Richard, he had lost his own fair name, and cast upon his Order, so the good monk feared, a lasting stain. It was even said, he told me, that if the writings of Duns Scotus had been accidentally destroyed, the learned Penketh could have reproduced them

THE TRIAL AT THE FRIARY.

all from memory. And, as the black-robed brother dwelt, with pardonable pride, upon his manifold achievements, I recalled the words:

> [1] *Gloucester.*—Go, Lovel, with all speed to Dr. Shaw;
> (*To Catesby*).—Go thou to Friar Penker; bid them both
> Meet me within this hour at Baynard's Castle.

And I knew that *Weryngton* had given a figure to the works of the immortal bard!

My guide, who, in spite of his cowl, was a most genial and interesting fellow, told me much about the fame and learning of the Order; how its members had renounced the world, possessed all things in common, and devoted themselves to the service of God and of the poor; how they had planted themselves in populous localities, and attracted mighty congregations by the potence of their preaching and the fame of their good deeds; how they had, at first, supported themselves entirely by begging, and, hence, had usually fixed their friaries in the vicinity of some bridge, or ford, or other frequented place—they had, he said, a chapel at

1 "The Tragedy of King Richard the Third." Act III., Scene 5.

the bridge below, and a hermitage by St. Oswald's Well, in Winwick—and, mingling freely with the people, gained such popularity that soon great benefactions were showered in upon them ; but how, alas, they earned the hatred of the other orders in proportion to the love and reverence bestowed upon themselves.

Beyond the boundaries of the great building I could see commodious barns, and stables, and dove-houses ; walled orchards full of luscious fruit ; and pleasant meadows, leading to the margin of a stream that shone with fishes and brought daily tribute to their doors.

Before we parted, he conducted me to the refectory, and offered me a slice of salmon newly caught ; some venison from Burtonwood ; a draught of beer from their own brewhouse ; and a wonderful liqueur, concocted, he informed me, by a toothsome friar who hailed from sunnier climes, and took peculiar interest in the contents of the cellar.

I left the precincts of the Friary with pleasant memories, and, passing up the street, was much impressed by its appearance. The houses

were irregular and ill-designed, but singularly picturesque. High ornamental gables, silhouetted strikingly against a blue sky ; the upper stories frequently projecting so far across the narrow street as to enable those who occupied adjacent houses to shake hands above the intervening way ; spacious doorways, often beautifully carved; long rows of narrow windows, set in walls divided by rich ornamental panellings of black and white ; the shops below them open stalls ; the rooms behind, with few exceptions, dark and cheerless ; but, in many instances, instinct with true artistic feeling—such were the chief characteristics of the architecture. The staple trade appeared to be in coarse frieze cloth and linen webs. I discovered armourers and smiths at every turn. I also noticed, as I sauntered up the street, the signs of glovers, *sowters* (or shoemakers), cooks, fullers, *naylers*, masons, fishers, millers, and thatchers. Harpers, too, and pipers were conspicuous figures in the town, whilst religion boasted quite a tribe of miscellaneous functionaries. Many of the people were employed in agriculture, and behind the gabled houses there were always fields and gardens. In the fields, I noticed with surprise that flax was

largely grown, but I looked in vain for any signs of the potato; and, in the gardens, side by side with many well-known trees, I saw the beautiful arbutus flourishing, which struck me as a little strange. There were swans upon the river, and flocks of wild-fowl floated by me in the sunny air. The street was dotted everywhere with black-robed monks, or stalwart men-at-arms, or sturdy archers, or less war-like citizens in gay attire; whilst, here and there, from those low doors, some apple-faced young English girl looked out on me with shining eyes. Occasionally I should meet a horseman, but the town appeared to be well-nigh devoid of vehicles, and those I saw were of a very clumsy kind.

I had reached a point, by this, where four main thoroughfares converged, and a passer-by quite startled me by muttering to his comrade something about *Marethk Yate*.

"Will you kindly tell me what is the name of the street up which I have just come?" I asked, accosting him with a good-morrow.

"Why, *Newgate Strete*," he said, with a queer glance at me. "Art thou a stranger here?"

"I scarcely know," I answered, for, by this, my head was in a whirl. "I seem to recognize it all, and yet it all seems unfamiliar. What streets are these?" and, as I spoke, I pointed to the west and east in turn.

"That is *Sonkey Gate*," he said, "and leads to Penketh. And this is *Kyrke Strete*, and will take thee to St. Elfin's."

I went up *Sonkey Gate* a little way, but found the buildings ceased within a hundred yards or so, and that the road ran on through cultivated fields until I reached, upon the left, a narrow road which led from it at right angles towards the river. This, I found, was known as *Slygcher's Lane*. A few steps further, and I saw a great white cross by the wayside, near which two monks were asking alms; and then, returning, sauntered down the road which led towards the church a little way, until I reached a comfortable hostelry which was called the *Morsland*—no doubt in memory of the Crusades. Here I paused to make some enquiries, passing afterwards into the street which ran towards the north, and was known as the way leading to *Longforthe*. I had not gone many paces when I noticed, on the left, a narrow

alley called *Pratte Row*, which led into an open space surrounded by the same old gabled buildings as had won my admiration so in the main streets.

I ascertained that here the good folks of the town had bought and sold, and here the country folk had come to trade with them, ever since *Sir William le Botiller* had obtained for *Weryngton* the right to hold a weekly market and an annual fair —the first on Friday, the second on the eve, the day, and the morrow of the translation of St. Thomas the Martyr, and the five following days, in the month of July (1255-1277), the public-spirited old knight obtaining afterwards the extended right to hold a fair upon the eve, the day, and the morrow of St. Andrew the Apostle, and five following days—in November—and to change the market day to Wednesday (1285).

I left the Market and strolled down the street, intent on visiting the mansion of the *Botiller* family. The shops and houses on the route were of the usual type, and in my walk I had discovered many names which fell upon my ears familiarly and had a pleasant sound. There

BEWSEY HALL.

were [1]a Baxter and a Fletcher; a *Gylle* and a Hatton; a *Holme* and a *Hoggekynson;* a *Madur* and a *Munke;* a Parr and a *Patun;* a Webster and a *Wilkynson,* with several others which I need not mention; and I heard much of a rich mercer, *William Arosmythe,* some time deceased, and of a wealthy draper known as *Oliver Berdisley.* I passed *Pyghull* upon the right, and then, diverging up a country lane upon the left, I sauntered on through pleasant fields until I reached a spacious heath aglow with gorse, and purple here and there with heather. I noticed snipe on it in great abundance, and from a field upon its verge a lark was making heaven dizzy with its song. Upon the other side the heath I saw a spreading woodland, whilst the roof and chimneys of an ancient manor-house arose beyond a brook which babbled through a pleasant valley, and above the trees which absolutely hemmed it in. I crossed the brook, and noticed that the mansion I was rapidly approaching was encircled by a moat. A drawbridge stood in front of me, and, sauntering over this, I boldly passed some armed retainers, and approached a reverend-looking fellow whom I took to be the chaplain.

1 See the famous "Legh Manuscript."

"Sir Thomas and his lady are away at Lathom," he exclaimed "What may your business be?"

"I merely wished to see their ancient manor-house, of which I have heard many interesting tales," was my reply.

"Then come with me, good sir, and I will do the honours in their absence. Sir Thomas has made wondrous alterations in the place of recent years. In addition to the various sleeping chambers, it consisted formerly of a great hall, with a bartizan turret; 'the parler,' where the retainers of the family did fealty for their estates; a chapel, a buttery, and a pantry opposite the hall; a kitchen and a cellar; a day-house, and a brew-house."

"Everybody seems to look after that," I interrupted smiling.

He laughed good-naturedly, and, taking me inside, he showed me an extensive gallery, which had been lately added, with several smaller rooms and an additional kitchen and buttery. In the hall, he pointed out a window blazing with rich coats of arms, and, prominent among them, the shield *azure* with the bend *or*, and the six covered cups of gold, impaled with the shield

argent and the lion rampant *gules.* Immediately in front of the window was a table nine yards long and three or four feet wide, with a line across it some three inches from its upper end, and a parallel line at a distance of four feet. Taking up some flat and heavy metal weights, he showed me how, by practice, one could push them with such skill that they would carry just beyond the further line, and still remain upon the table. I tried myself, but sent the metal spinning on the floor, at which he laughed outright, and said that I was evidently not well versed in the old game of shovel-board.

Around the hall were trophies of the field and chase, and in one of the adjacent chambers I discovered various illuminated manuscripts, and several precious volumes which were some of the first daughters of the printing-press; for Sir Thomas was of studious tastes, and had mixed, at Lathom, with Erasmus, with William Smyth, the Bishop of Lincoln, with Hugh Oldham, too, the Bishop of Exeter, and with other learned men. The gallant knight spent many hours among his books, but often joined his guests at merry games in the great hall; whilst, if he

wanted sterner sport, the moat and the adjacent streams and pools were full of fish, the woods were tenanted by troops of nimble deer, there was a *hearonrye* within his broad domain, and every tree was alive with feathers and each tangled coppice thick with shifting fur.

"But has the noble knight ne'er buckled on the sword?" I asked.

"Ay, many a time, good sir," he quickly said. "He fought for our brave monarch and received his spurs at Bosworth (1485). In the strife against the rebel, Lambert Simnel, he is commonly reported to have done his share (1487); and have you not heard how, from these parts, he led a host of gallant fellows to far Flodden Field (1513); how furious waxed the strife that boisterous day; how presently the rumour ran that he and those who followed him were slain; and how his gallant archers held their posts and sent their brave shafts spinning to their goal till Stanley's famous charge achieved the victory? Ay,

> 'Lancashire, like lions,
> Laid them about,'

and in that fight against a gallant foe Sir Thomas

"and each man who followed him won bays which will not fade."

"Is fighting in the *Botiller* blood?" I asked.

"The family have had their share of it," he said, with a grave smile. And straightway he went on to tell me something of their history; of how they were descended from Richard *Pincerna*, or butler, to Hugh *Lupus*, Earl of Chester, a post, in those days, of considerable consequence, to which they owed their name; how they became the lords of *Werryngton* by the marriage of a later Richard to sweet *Beatrix de Villers*, the heiress of [1]the ancient family who had resided in the Norman stronghold on *Mote* Hill; how it was said to have been destroyed by fire in the reign of the Third Henry; and how they had then removed to *Beausey*, and erected there the stately mansion it was now my privilege to see. He went on to tell me that an early member of the family had fought at Evesham in the army of "St. Simon the Righteous," as the people called the famous rebel baron (1265),

1 The lions in the Borough Arms—both old and new—are taken from the arms of the *De Villers*, the first lords of Warrington.

and only saved his life and fortunes by his timely subsequent submission ; how they had taken part in subjugating Ireland (1210), and had marched with a great host to conquer Wales (1282), and gone on many a futile expedition to the north to conquer Scotland ; how [1]one of them, in the midst of daring deeds in Britanny, was sorely wounded, made a prisoner, and only saved from execution through the valour and the strategy of bold Sir Walter Manny (1342) ; how another had shared with John of Gaunt in all the glories of the victory of Naverete (1371), and afterwards been taken captive in the course of a crusade against the Saracens of Barbary, but rescued through the intervention of the king, who ransomed him (1389) ; and how a third, accompanied by forty archers and nine men-at-arms, had sailed with that brave army which had won immortal bays at Agincourt, but missed his share in them through prematurely dying of dysentry before the grim walls of Harfleur (1415). And, in the long and bitter feud between the Red Rose and the White, these valiant knights (leal friends of Lancaster, their native shire), had doughtily up-

1 See "Froissart's Chronicles."

held the cause, for, in addition to Sir Thomas, of whose share in it he had already told me, one of them was said to have fought at Blore (1459), and well-nigh lost his liberty; and one had ridden with Margaret to Tewkesbury (1471), and either died upon the battle-field or by the vengeful headsman's bloody axe.

Much more he told me of the high deeds of these ancient "lords of *Werington*," and not alone of "moving accidents by flood and field," but of religious houses founded, and of bridges built, and charters won, and sterling services in Parliament; and waxed particularly eloquent about the great Sir William to whose enterprize we owed our markets and our fairs, and from whose knightly hand the town had managed to obtain its *Magna Carta*. A copy of this ancient document, written in Latin, he was good enough to show to me; and, though I found it somewhat difficult to understand—like many legal documents of later date—I gathered that it had conferred enormous privileges on the town, and was, indeed, as big a boon to *Werington* as was its mighty namesake to the land at large.

There had, it seemed, been "a contention"

betwixt Sir William and his "freetenants" as to various matters of importance; but, upon St. Mary Magdalene's Day, 1292, before the Court at Lancaster, their differences had all been settled, and he had agreed with them that they should be "acquitted of toll" in the aforesaid "fairs and markets" of the town; that they should be allowed to use their own weights and measures when no others were specifically prescribed; that, if their cattle trespassed, any damage should be assessed by a jury of their fellow-townsmen, and paid in kind; that their hogs might roam at large "within the bounds of *Werington*" except within Sir William's wood, but that, if they trespassed there, they were to pay the "pawnage" charged to strangers; that they should not be forced to take an oath against their will unless by "precept of" "the king"; that they should not "be amerced for any fault" except by jury, "in full court," and "according to a reasonable taxation"; or harassed at will with arbitrary "inquisitions"; or be called upon to bear the expense of prisoners illegally detained, or forced to act as their lord's bailiff's; nor should their heirs be liable to lose the profits of their holdings during their minority, or compelled to

pay a grant for the renewal of the same, except "according to the tenor of their feoffments," or, in other words, the terms on which they actually held them; and, finally, that the freetenants should themselves appoint "the keepers of the assise of bread and beer"—that is to say, the officers who fixed the weight or measure and the quality and price of these important articles.

The charter promised that these privileges should enure to them for ever; and it was authenticated by Sir William's seal, which he had affixed in the presence of a number of witnesses amongst whose names I noticed *Adam de Hocton*, *Robert de Bolde*, *Robert de Wulston*, *Alan de Rixton*, *Robert de Sonky*, and *Gilbert de Werington*, clerk.

It had, however, evidently been regarded as one-sided in its operation, and apparently had thrown some doubt upon Sir William's right to hold a court in *Werington* at all; for my companion showed me, next, a charter dated 1300 in which "all the free tenants and commonalty of the whole town of *Werinton*," after sending "eternal greeting in the lord" "to all men both present and to come who shall see or hear this writing," had conceded to Sir William "a court

"burgess in *Werington* with all manner of liberties appurtenances and appendages to the same," relinquishing, both for themselves and for their heirs, all right to challenge it, and adding to the document, in token of their power, "the seal of the commonalty of the aforesaid town." Amongst the witnesses were *Nicholas le Botiller*, *Mathew de Haydoc*, *Gilbert de Sothewyrth*, *Alan de Rixton*, *William de Aderton*, *Henry de Tildeslegh*, and *Gilbert de Culchit*. It, too, was dated on St. Mary Magdalene's day—at *Werington*; and from it I inferred that, five hundred and forty-seven years before its last incorporation, Warrington could call itself a borough.[1]

Anon, my friend would rivet my attention by grim tales of *Robert Geffeson*, an ancient bearward, for, in addition to the cruel sports of hawking, fishing, fowling, and hunting, cock-fighting and both bull- and bear-baiting were much in vogue; or he would amuse me by recalling divers jokes of *William Silche*, a former jester, or arouse my sympathies by stories of

1 The originals of each of these extremely ancient and most interesting documents may still be seen at the Museum, and each has been explained at length by Mr. Beamont in his "Warrington in the Thirteenth Century."

a more romantic kind ; and I was deeply interested in the misadventures of the Lady Isabella, who was early left a widow, and whose beauty so infatuated William Poole that he came hither in the night-time, with a wild-eyed following, and bore her off to Birkenhead.

"And was there not a hapless knight who met his death within these walls through treachery?" I asked.

"Ah, that is a still darker story, gentle sir," quoth he, and led the way up the great stair, exclaiming, as we went, "Sir John was murdered in his bed whilst the Lady Margaret was in London. His porter—a deceitful knave—had, at the instigation of 'Sir *Peirs Leygh* and Mr. William Savage,' set 'a light in a windowe to give knowledge....when the watch....were gone awaye to their owne homes.' The caitiffs crossed 'the moate in lether boats,' and, the servants having been corrupted, made their way to this room." So saying, he paused in front of one of the best bed-chambers. "Here they slew his chamberlain, brave *Houcroft*, but *Houcroft's* brother, to whom they held out offers of 'great exaltation,' cruelly betrayed his lord. Look,

"there is blood in the passage and upon the wainscot; there is blood at the door where *Houcroft* kept the murderers at bay; and here, within the room itself, you may behold the deeper stain which marks the spot where he expired. A maid, with ready wit, concealed the present knight in her apron, underneath a heap of chips; and, as you will be doubtless glad to know, the 'exaltation' which the villains gave to the black traitor was to hang him on the nearest oak within the park. And so fare all such miscreants, say I. But yonder comes a harper from the town, and peradventure you would like to hear the tale."

We went into the court-yard, and, at his request, the venerable minstrel, who had just appeared, having struck some quivering chords from his rude instrument, with a doleful voice and sad gesticulations, sang for us the tragic

[1]BALLAD OF BEWSEY.

"But word is come to warrington,
& Busye hall is laid about;

1 This quaint old ballad gives a somewhat different version of the story than the one already quoted—from the "Dodsworth MSS."—and is said to be of later date.

"Sr. Iohn Butler and his merry men
stand in ffull great doubt.

"when they came to Busye hall
itt was the merke midnight,
and all the bridges were vp drawen,
and neuer a candle Light.

"there they made them one good boate,
all of one good Bull skinn;
Will. Sauage was one of the ffirst
yt. euer came itt wthin.

"hee sayled ore his merrymen
by 2 and 2 together,
& said itt was as good a bote
as ere was made of lether.

"'waken you, waken you, deare ffather,
God waken you wthin!
for heere is yor. vncle standlye
come yor. hall wthin.'

"'if yt be true, Ellen Butler,
these tydings you tell mee,
a 100 li. in good redd gold
this night will not borrow mee.'

"then came downe Ellen Butler
& into her ffathers hall,
& then came downe Ellen Butler,
and she was laced in pall.

"'where is thy ffather, Ellen Butler?
haue done, and tell itt mee.'
'my ffather is now to London ridden,
as Christ shall haue pt. of mee.'

" 'Now nay, Now nay, Ellen Butler,
ffor so itt must not bee ;
ffor ere I goe fforth of this hall
yor. ffather I must see.'

" thé sought yt. ball then vp and downe
theras Iohn Butler Lay ;
thé sought yt. hall then vp and downe
theras Iohn Butler Lay ;

" ffaire him ffall, little Holcroft!
soe Merrilye he kept the dore,
till yt. his head ffrom his shoulders
came tumbling downe the floore.

" 'yeeld thee, yeelde thee, Iohn Butler!
yeelde thee now to mee!'
'I will yeelde me to my vncle Stanlye,
& neere to ffalse Peeter Lee.'

" 'a preist, a preist,' saies Ellen Butler
'to housel and to shriue!
'a preist, a preist,' sais Ellen Butler,
'while yt. my father is man aliue!'

" then bespake him will. Sauage,
a shames death may he dye!
sayes, 'he shall haue no other preist
but my bright sword and mee.'

" the Ladye Butler is to London rydden,
shee had better haue beene att home,
shee might haue begged her owne marryed Lo:
att her good Brother Iohn.

" & as shee lay in leeue London,
& as shee lay in her bedd,
shee dreamed her owne marryed Lo:
was swiminnge in blood soe red.

" shee called vp her merry men all
long ere itt was day,
saies, 'wee must ryde to Busye hall
wth all speed yt. we may.'

" shee met wth. 3 Kendall men
were ryding by the way:
'tydings, tydings, Kendall men,
I pray you tell itt mee!'

" 'heauy tydings, deare Madam!
ffrom you wee will not Leane,
the worthyest Kt. in merry England,
Iohn Butler, Lord! hee is slaine.'

" 'ffarewell, ffarwell, Iohn Butler!
ffor thee I must neur. see.
ffarewell, ffarwell, Busiye hall!
for thee I will neuer come nye.'

" Now Ladye Butler is to London againe,
in all the speed might bee;
& when shee came before her prince,
shee kneeled low downe on her knee:

" 'a boone, a boone, my Leege!' she sayes,
'ffor gods loue grant itt mee:'
'what is thy boone, Lady Butler?
or what wold thou haue of me?'

" ' what is thy boone, Lady Butler!
or what wold thou haue of me?'
'yt. ffalse Peeres of Lee, and my brother Stanley,
& will. Sauage, and all, may dye.'

" ' come you hither, Lady Butler,
come you ower this stone;
wold you haue 3 men ffor to dye,
all ffor the losse of one?

" ' come you hither Lady Butler,
with all the speed you may;
if thou wilt come to London, La: Butler,
thou shalt goe home Lady Gray.'"

We gave the singer fitting alms, and proffered him a tankard filled with foaming ale, and then we crossed the moat and went into the park. A mighty woodland plasaunce I discerned in it, with giant trees, and bracken yellowing everywhere, and bushes bright with early berries, and sweet glades begemmed with flowers. At every turn some lordly bird whizzed by, some bright-eyed creature darted from the tangled undergrowth, or some antlered stag peered out upon us from his silvan hiding-place. And, as we went, he told me that, when any ill impended over the ancestral home, a beautiful white rabbit was observed within the woods. No arrow ever pierced its wondrous coat, and, though all the

knight's retainers hemmed it in, it always managed to mysteriously escape. Sometimes, he added, those who dwelt within the hall had seen the stately figure of the murdered man pace silently along the haunted corridors, and, at midnight, seek the blood-stained room. And, whenever a new servitor was added to the household, there would come a ghastly figure who, with heavy tread and dreadful clank of armour, climbed the creaking stairs to thunder at the timorous damsel's door.

But, even as we walked and talked, there came the challenge of a trumpet, and the distant sound of horses' feet.

"Sir Thomas has returned," he said, "and I must sally forth to meet him. You may follow me, an so you will, into the hall."

The noble knight had unexpectedly come back from Lathom, and a long-projected plan was simmering actively within his brain, the fruit, no doubt, of many a chat with those who tarried in its learned air. He bade me welcome, cordially invited me to join him at his hospitable board, and, when the table had been cleared, he

told me how his friends, Hugh Oldham and William Smyth, had founded Grammar Schools respectively at Manchester and Farnworth, and how his mind was moved to do the same for his much-loved native town. [1]There were, he said, few schools of grammar where men's sons might learn to know Almighty God, and to serve Him, and avoid and eschew all vices, and use good manners; and that to learn grammar was the original ground and fountain out of which proceeded the plain way to come to a clear understanding of good living, and become clear lanthorns to the country round about. He therefore purposed to bequeath five hundred marks wherewith to found and to endow, in [2]*Weryngton*, a free Grammar School which should endure for ever; and to appoint an honest priest to be master of the school, and to regularly say mass and do divine service at the Parish Church for

1 See the Will of Sir Thomas Boteler, dated 16th August, 1520, and the Foundation Deed of the Grammar School, dated 16th April, 1526.

2 In addition to the various spellings included in the present chapter I have come across the following: *Warenton*, *Werintone*, *Werynton*, and *Weryntone*.

the soul of himself and of his wife, Dame Margaret.

I listened eagerly to all he said, and noticed how his old eyes shone as he unfolded to my sympathetic ear his cherished scheme; and, after chatting with him pleasantly for perhaps an hour or so, I thanked him cordially for his hospitality, and, telling him that generations yet unborn would bless his memory, I bade the grand old knight adieu.

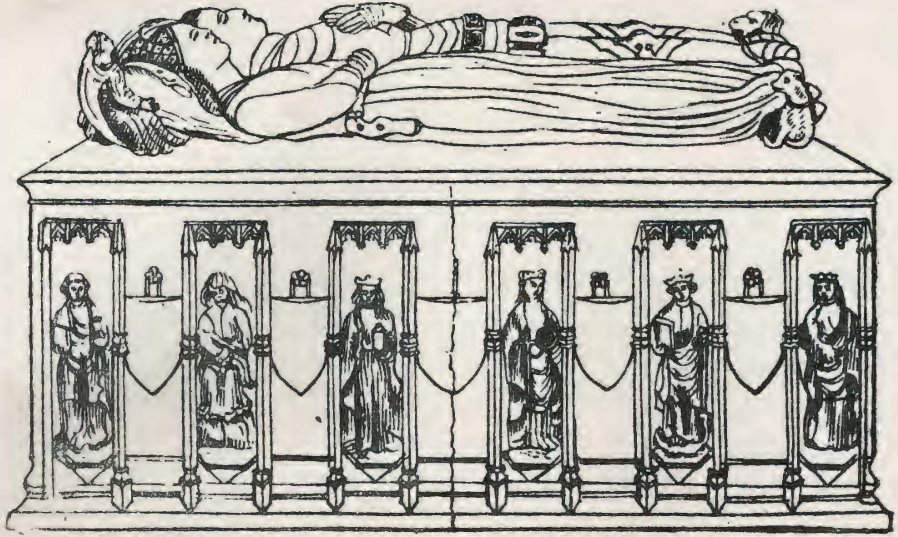
CHAPTER IV.

THE SCENE OF CIVIL STRIFE.

I returned to *Weryngton* with ample food for thought, passing by *Pyghull*, and over the low ridge of land called *Cocage*, by [1] a curious edifice constructed of rude oaken beams arranged in pairs, the lower ends of which were sunk into the ground, the upper meeting in a lofty arch to form the roof, the intervening spaces being cleverly filled in with sticks and clay, and the interior resembling in its architecture some diminutive but stately church. I naturally paused to peep at this, and then, by crossing *Hethe Strete*, reached *Bag Lane*, a narrow roadway parallel to *Kyrke Strete*. There were barely half a dozen houses in it, and smiling fields and gardens stretching out on either hand, and

1 This building still exists, and is said to be the oldest house in Warrington, being mentioned in 1592 as the residence of "*Richarde ffarbes*, junior." It is worthy of intelligent renovation.

THE OLDEST HOUSE IN WARRINGTON.



THE TOMB OF SIR JOHN AND LADY BUTLER.

presently I found myself once more by the old church. I entered it, and, as I stood beside a noble alabaster monument, admiring two recumbent figures beautifully carved, a monk, in the black garb which had by now become familiar, approached, and, noticing my interested attitude, he told me that this was the loving monument erected by the wife of the poor murdered knight of *Beausey*, and that here both slumbered, in the light of those stained windows and within the shadow of God's holy church, until the great awakening.

I stood absorbed in reverie before the alabaster tomb, and heard, as in a dream, the sound of some high service at the altar. Then a cloud of incense filled the place, and all grew shadowy ; but through the scented atmosphere I seemed to catch, from time to time, the sound of cannon, mingled with a Babel of excited voices ; and, presently, a throng of people rushed into the church, with cries and clamourings ; and loud and louder yet there came the roar of rude artillery, mingled with the cracking of the chancel walls and roof and the crash of falling glass. The monks had vanished, and the church was

filled with a great company of townsfolk, and with them soldiers not a few, who wore great broad-brimmed caps adorned with feathers, and, from their general character, were recognizable, at once, as Cavaliers. I turned to a bold fellow, armed with sword and pistols, and evidently someone in authority, and asked him what the rabble meant.

"Have you not heard?" he said. "Why, Colonel Assheton is laying siege to Warrington. He has planted his artillery upon *Mote* Hill, and is doing all he can—the sour-faced renegade—to bring the church about our ears."

"But what is all the fighting for?" I asked.

"You must have dropped from some high planet not to know," he said. And then he told me how the Parliament was in revolt against the King; how Charles had meant, at first, to raise his standard in "the good old town," and how the Earl of Derby had assembled here a body of twenty thousand troops with that in view; but how his envious enemies had whispered black suspicions in the monarch's ear, and so
1642. persuaded him to raise the flag at Nottingham instead; how from the town

To Prescot
To Bridge
To Manchester
From Burtly Hall
WARRINGTON
HEATH
MOOT HILL
CHURCH
WARRINGTON
WHITE CROSS
From LIVERPOOL
CANKEY BRIDGE
LATCHFORD
ACKERS COMMON
RIVER MERSEY
From Chester
STOCKTON HEATH
CHAPEL
BURIAL GD
HILL CLIFF
To Stockton & Northwich
PLAN OF WARRINGTON
1643
One Mile

the Earl had sallied forth on various sieges, and had from time to time succeeded, but had oftener failed; how he had fortified it to the best of his ability with rude mud walls; and how, but lately, he had routed a body of Roundheads, under Captain Arderne, capturing their standards, and securing many prisoners, on Stockton Heath. He added that the timely coming of Sir William Brereton, with reinforcements, had alone prevented their complete discomfiture. The Earl, it seemed, had then retired; but, at four o'clock, had sent a body of his soldiers forth again by way of the old ford at Latchford, carrying the captured flags; and, thanks to these, they had managed to cross Ackers Common unsuspected, and had fallen suddenly upon the right flank of the foe, the Earl himself departing, meanwhile, by the Bridge, and marching swiftly up the Causeway to attack them simultaneously in front, and so completely routing them,[1] "with greate slaughter and little labor." The slain, I found, had been interred in the old burial-ground upon the hill, and some at Budworth, several miles away. **1643.**

1 "The Mercurius Aulicus": Civil War Tracts, 95.

This victory had much elated the defenders of the place, and correspondingly perplexed their doughty adversaries, for one of them, as I was afterwards to learn, had thus described the unexpected issues of the day:

[1] "In great unpreparedness, in debt for Wigan, in neglect of means of reconciliation, in disorder and confidence (*sic*) of our soldiers, we assaulted Warrington, the fifth day of April, about four of the clock till the night took us off. Thither we came to leave our dead, to distress the well-affected in the town, to shame our courage, and in all to suffer the punishment of former miscarriages, wherein Cheshire deeply shared with us. Now we had the greatest strength abroad, partly our own and partly borrowed: 'But God delighteth not in the strength of the horse, he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man: the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.' (Psalm CXLVII., 10, 11.) Wigan (thought impregnable) proved easy; Warrington, thought easy, proved now impregnable. This seasonable check chode us to duty, to pub-

1 "Lancashire's Valley of Achor": Civil War Tracts, 135.

"A FAIR HOUSE OF ONE MR. BRIDGMAN'S."

"lick thanksgiving for Wigan mercy, the eleventh of April; to humiliation under Warrington displeasure, the thirteenth of April."

But my friend went on to tell me that the triumph of the garrison had been exceedingly short-lived, for, two days later, Sir William had crossed the Mersey by the ford at Hale, and, the Manchester forces, accompanied by Col. Rosworm,[1] "their valiant and faithfull *Germane* engineer," having just arrived from Wigan, at four o'clock [2]"begirt the town about, and fiercely assaulted it"; and had "gotten Sankey Bridge, [3]a fair House of one Mr. Bridgman's, and some of the outer Walls, and within a short space of Time were likely to have the whole," whereon the Earl had "set the middle of the Town on Fire, protesting" volubly that "hee would burn it all ere they should have it," a determination which had somewhat palsied them;

1 "Vicars' Parliamentary Chronicle."

2 Edward Burghall's Diary: "Pronidence Improved."

3 "The Black Horse." The initials "R.B." and the date "1632" are visible on an oak beam in front of it. The occupant at the time referred to was Edward Bridgman, brother to Bishop Bridgman. He compounded with the Parliament for his estate, in 1647, by paying a fine of £100.

but how they tarried in the neighbourhood three days or so, and then, observing that he evidently meant to keep his word—for everywhere the fire was waxing in intensity—to "save" the town "from utter desolation," they good-naturedly "departed for that time."

Soon after this, it seemed, the Earl had also taken his departure, and, after a defeat at Whalley and a temporary sojourn at his lordly home at Lathom, he had gone to join the Queen at York, whereon the gallant Colonel Norris had been honoured with the chief command. Much more of similar import he was good enough to tell me in the pauses of the firing, and then he left to give directions to a body of troops within the tower.

On all that happened in the next few days I have not space to dwell, but I was witness of strange scenes, and shared in keen excitements. I found that, prior to the siege, the country-folk from the surrounding districts had been[1] "straitly" "chardged and commanded," in his Majesty's name, to bring "p'vision of victualls and oates

1 See Warrants in the Warrington Museum.

"and hay" into the town for the use of the defending forces; that, having heard from "3 severall messengers that the Enemy" intended "very speedily to assault" them, all able-bodied men who were over sixteen years of age and less than sixty had been summoned to assist in its defence; and that many of them were at present thus engaged. The besiegers, who had left Manchester on Saturday, the 20th May, and been joined upon the march by the Cheshire forces under Sir George Booth, of Dunham Massey, had reached Warrington on Whit Sunday, and commenced the assault upon the following day. It was, at present, in full progress, but, in the heat of it, there came the lamentable news that Charles's forces had been checked at Wakefield; that the church at Winwick had been captured, although the brave defenders in the tower had stood to terms [1] "till God sent a deadly messenger out of a fowling piece to one of them"; and that the enemy had also captured Southworth hall, a neighbouring mansion held by Roman Catholics, and well supplied with provisions. The rebels had been further heartened by the

1 "Lancashire's Valley of Achor."

failure of our own most formidable "peece" the second time we fired it; and triumphantly declared that, one still night, as some of them were working in the trenches, within half a musket-shot of the town, and greatly dreading an abrupt discovery in consequence of the exceeding calm, God sent a mighty wind "that took away the noise," and so enabled them to carry on their work unknown and unobserved by those within the walls. Moreover, they were mightily incensed against the place by reason of a rumour that the garrison had treated divers captives with unnecessary harshness, and had actually killed in their own house a pious pair who worshipped at Hill Cliff.

But, notwithstanding all these facts, my fellow-townsmen made a gallant stand, and, in the very middle of the siege, and when the church and steeple had been taken by the invading forces, I was privileged to see them boldly hanging out upon their loftiest chimney Charles's flag, as though to hurl defiance in the teeth of all his enemies. From Monday until Saturday they kept the Roundhead host at bay, [1] "the Souldiers

1 Burghall's "Providence Improved."

"behaving themselves very bravely"; and, had it not been for the fact that our provisions failed, and that "Bread and other Necessaries" were becoming "scarce," we might, I think, have managed to retain the old town for the King till succour came, in spite of all the difficulties of the task. But hunger is a sharper weapon than the sword, and, realizing what it meant to us, the Colonel and his counsellors considered it expedient, that day, to come "to a Parley, when it was agreed upon That the Town should be rendered up, & that Capts. & Comanders should depart with every man his Horse and Pistols, and all the Souldiers to pack unarmed, and leave all their arms, amunition and Provision behind them, which was done accordingly." And so, as one of the old Roundhead chroniclers declared, [1]"some recompence God made to tyred Warrington in the shortnesse of the Siege, and security from spoyle, which we charitably made an article of our Peace."

The Roundheads were, however, naturally jubilant, and loudly boasted how they had [2]"taken

1 "Lancashire's Valley of Achor."

2 Vicars' "Parliamentary Chronicle."

"and fully possessed themselves of the good and strong town in Lancashire, called Warrington, being the last Hold of considerable strength and consequence that the Papists had in all that county;" and they claimed to have seized at least six hundred prisoners, together with eight formidable guns. What chiefly galled the garrison, however, was the news which came to hand, a little later, that Lord Capell had despatched a messenger to say that, if they could but keep the town a little longer, he would come to their relief from *White Church*, and would raise the siege; and that this messenger had been arrested by the *Namptwich* forces on the way, who, finding out his errand, hastened on to *White Church*, "sodainly surprised that Town, slue about an hundred and fiftie malignants, took forty prisoners, some of them men of eminencie and good worth, took five hundred armes besides Ammunition of Powder, and Bullets and Match, and manned and fortified the town bravely for the King (*sic*) and Parliament, and so wiped the Lord Capell's nose both of his poore expectation of relieving Warrington, and hereby also sent him to seek another lodging where he could get it."

But I must not linger on the further details of the siege, extremely interesting as they are. I saw Sir George Booth, who was now Lord of the Manor, march triumphantly into the place on Trinity Sunday; and had many chances in the peaceful weeks that followed—broken, in the autumn, by some apprehensions of renewed attack—of acquainting myself with all that had occurred since the romantic times of Sir Thomas *le Botiller*. I found that his benevolent intentions had been duly carried out, and that, thanks to him and to his wife and son, and notwithstanding various unexpected difficulties, Warrington could boast of a Free Grammar School; but I heard with sorrow that two further generations had not passed before the grand old knight's impoverished descendant, Edward, the last of the *Botillers*, had been obliged to sell "the fair seat" and the family estates to *Robert Duddeley*, Earl of Leicester, the favourite of Good Queen Bess (1587); and that his brother Ambrose, Earl of Warwick, who succeeded him, in 1588, had alienated from the church the tithes of Poulton, Fearnhead, Woolston, Martinscroft, and Rixton, conferring them upon the hospital which had been founded in that ancient town by his dis-

tinguished relative and predecessor for the benefit of soldiers and of sailors wounded in their country's wars. The Earl had not enjoyed his new possessions long, however, for, in 1592, they passed to Sir Robert *Duddeley*, an illegitimate descendant of the favourite of the Queen. This Robert seemed to have been a shrewd old fellow, for he had carefully drawn up a most exhaustive survey, still extant, of his estates, which included a *resumé* of "the auncient Customes Statutes & ordinances of ye Towne of Warrington, established used and continewed for ye good gouernment comonweath & p'fitte of ye said Towne." And very sensible and interesting many of them were.

But, in 1597, Sir Robert sold the estate to Thomas Ireland and to Richard Bould, the former of whom (whose ancestors came over with the Conqueror) acquired the whole of it by purchase shortly afterwards, and had been honoured by [1]a visit from his Majesty King James, who had

1 It is said that the famous "Book of Sports" was due to the complaints which had been made to the King, on the occasion of this visit, by the poorer portion of the population of Lancashire.

[1]" lain" a night at Bewsey, and conferred upon his host, " of his free grace," the honour of a knighthood, journeying thence through Warrington, to " the magnificent fabrick of Rocksavage . . . to accept the princely entertainment which there for his majesty, and whole train, was prepared by the honourable Sir Thomas Savage ; his royal majesty taking his repast there, and killing a buck in Halton Park." Sir Thomas Ireland was apparently as shrewd and careful as Sir Robert *Duddeley*, for, one bright afternoon, on visiting his moated manor-house, it was my privilege to see a very curious " privy note of goods Remayninge in the howse of Bewsey Anno dni 1615," which showed that the old man had carefully examined it from roof to basement, and made a very curious and careful inventory of all the goods and chattels it contained. His son, however, sold the manor, in 1628, to William Booth, of Dunham Massey, from whom it passed, in due succession, to Sir George. But Bewsey had, itself, been specially excluded from the sale, Sir Thomas thoughtfully reserving it for [2]his daughter Margaret.

1 William Webb's "Itinerary."

2 She married her cousin, Sir Gilbert Ireland of the Hutt

The town had changed a good deal in these intervening years. Many of the oldest of the mud and plaster houses had given place to new, but the streets retained their ancient picturesqueness, and, as Leland had described it in the reign of "Bluff King Hal," "*Warington*" was "a pavid Towne" "of a prety Bygnes," with "the Paroche Chirche" "at the Tayle of al the Towne." Its river was full of fish-yards; and its commerce manifestly throve, for, as the writer quaintly added, it was "a better Market than Manchester." Grain, flax, and hemp were then the principal commodities, I ascertained, and *Sonky Streete* was full of hemp-yards. The grain was principally sold in Golden Square—then called the *Cheape* or *Cheapinge Place;* and here I saw the usual Market Cross, to give to the abundant trafficking the holiest of sanctions, and to impress upon the chattering traffickers a salutary fear of fraud. The larger space adjoining it was called the *Beaste Marckett*, whilst the sale of vegetables and farm produce generally was carried on in

and Hale, but, having no descendants, bequeathed it to the Athertons, of Atherton, through whom it ultimately passed by marriage to the Lilfords. The manor was sold to the Blackburnes, of Orford, in 1766.

Buttermarket, as the upper portion of the street which led towards the ancient church was called. The butchers' shambles occupied the upper end of Bridge Street—lately known as *Newgate Strete*—and, in two narrow alleys close to Golden Square, one known as *Boothe* Lane, and the other as the Little *Boothes*, the mercers did a thriving trade; whilst, in the same vicinity, there stood the unpretentious red stone Court House, with its well-worn steps and curious small square tower. But, alas! the "Freres Augustine at the Bridge Ende," of which Leland also speaks, had disappeared; their stately home had almost gone; and even their lovely church was falling into irremediable decay. The Friary itself had been dissolved, I found, in 1541, the site being granted to a certain Thomas Holcroft, who, some three years later, sold it to John *Cawdwall* for the sum of £126, reserving the right to remove the lead and stone, but covenanting "not to lette or interupte the inhabitauntes of the towne of *Weryngton* aforesayde from the usage and occupation of the churche of the late Freirs."

Camden, too, had been particularly taken with

our market, whilst "*Warrikin* Fair," as it was called in a quaint ballad which I often heard in my perambulations through the narrow streets, was still held twice in every year, and still, like some great magnet, drew to the old town, in hot July and cool November, half the population of the country-side. A later traveller had spoken of Warrington, a patriotic native proudly told me, as [1] "a sweetly built and situated" town, and, in his progress, had been specially impressed with *Winwike*, "the worth" of whose "Parsonage" he very naturally could not "forget." It was, at that particular period, some £2000 per annum; and I was not surprized to learn that our appreciative visitor "bestowed some small time in viewing such a Church, as maintains such a fat Rector, and in her the Monum'ts and Chappell of the Gerrards." And the famous Barnaby Harrington, or, as some say, Richard Brathwaite, popularly known as "Drunken Barnaby," had also visited the neighbourhood about this time, and, in his Journal, written in rhyming Latin, he had thus described it:

> "Thence to Warrington, banks o'erflowed,
> Travellers to the town were rowed;

1 "A Topographical Excursion in 1634."

" Where supposing it much better
To be drown'd on land than water,
Sweetly neatly I sojourned,
Till that deluge thence returned.
Thence to th' Cock i' Budworth, where I
Drank strong ale as brown as berry,
Till at last with deep healths filled,
To my bed I was compelled:
I for state was bravely sorted,
By two porters well supported."

The floods, I found, were very frequent, in wet weather; and no doubt the fish-yards in the river checked its progress somewhat, and accelerated that swift rising of the waters which, at intervals, made Arpley and the neighbourhood like one huge lake.

Colonel John Booth, brother of Sir **1645.**
George, had been appointed military governor of the town, and I saw the Committee of Sequestration sitting, at the old house in Lovely Lane familiar to my generation as the Clap-gates Farm, in order that the gentry who had forfeited their property might have the opportunity of compounding for the same. The Colonel managed to secure the good opinion of his fellow-townsfolk, and, amongst his other acts, set up a bell within the **1647.**
Court House tower, which rang the

curfew there for many a year, and ultimately found its home in the tall tower of Trinity. Moreover, steps were taken to repair the ravages occasioned by the fire and by the siege; the damage done to the church was remedied; and to our nascent industries we added, at this time, the art of making pins. And then the Plague appeared, and made such havoc that, by special order of the House of Commons, a collection was most generously made in London and in Westminster—two separate cities then—for the relief of the numerous "poor persons" in Chester and in Warrington who had been visited by this fell scourge, and, as the sad result of it, "were like to perish for want."

1648. But the Colonel, having been requested, after a brief interval, to resume the reins of government in consequence of an attempt to levy forces for the King in Cumberland and Westmoreland, was suddenly accused of keeping [1]"company with cavaliers," and traitorously enlisting numerous "delinquents and malignants" in the town. And a body of Cromwell's horse who happened to be passing through—in spite of his

1 "Cromwelliana."

THE EARL OF DERBY'S LODGINGS.

"divers good services for the parliament"—at once arrested him, together with a number of his followers, upon suspicion, at the news of which the rest made off post haste, but only to be captured and despatched to Liverpool.

In my numerous rambles to and fro, I noticed one particular house with very special interest. It was situate in *Kyrke Strete*, which was just as broad as the four central streets were narrow. The footways were not paved, and the main thoroughfare itself was irregular in the extreme. Between the centre and the side paths ran two open gutters, which sufficed to carry off the sewage, and over these, in places, broad flat flags were laid to give convenient access to the road. The house in question stood upon the south side of the street. It was a low, thatched building, with a gable in the centre and a smaller gable just beyond, and it altogether lacked distinction, yet it drew me strangely; for here had lodged the loyal Earl, or, as the rebels had vindictively described him [1] "the great ringleader of the Popish faction and Malignant partie," during that momen-

1 See letter from Thomas Jesland in Ormerod's "Civil War Tracts of Lancashire."

tous time when he had kept "his rendezvous at Warrington," and to his banner there had crowded daily from the two adjacent counties "great multitudes of ill-affected people" who had spoiled the country round about, and so much "incensed" the people, that "tide death, tide life," they had determined not "to endure" it any "longer." Moreover, from this unpretentious edifice the gallant nobleman had issued on those enterprizes which so often went against him, overwhelming him with trouble and perplexity, and wringing from him, one day, as he sat at dinner, the complaint that he must surely have been born 'neath some unlucky star; and here, in spite of all his Royal Master's slights, he had made that noble answer to the messenger who came from the Parliamentary leaders at Manchester to say that, if he would but engage in their good cause, he should have command equal to his own greatness, or that of any of his ancestors:

[1]"Pray tell the gentlemen at Manchester," he said, "and let them tell the gentlemen at London, that when they hear I turn traitor, I shall hearken to their proposition; till then, if I receive any

1 John Seacome's "House of Stanley."

other papers of this nature, it shall be at the peril of him who brings them."

But this peaceful interim was soon to pass. One morning, in the month of August, 1648, there came to Warrington the news that from the north a body of gallant Scotsmen, many thousand strong, led by the Duke of Hamilton, and marching to protect the King from an indignant Parliament, had been attacked by Cromwell outside Preston, and pursued towards the south with a great slaughter. Nay, even now, the rumour ran, the rival forces were engaged in deadly strife upon the high ground called Red Bank, which lies to the north of Winwick, on the way to Newton. What fresh excitement moved the hearts of my brave fellow-citizens at these alarming tidings may be better pictured than described. All day the dwellers in the town were all on flame, and many furbished up their swords and seized their muskets once again, prepared to don them instantly in case of need.

The battle raged with fearful vehemence, and, towards evening, the affrighted peasantry came thronging in to say that Charles's forces had been utterly defeated ; and that, even now, the Iron-

sides were on the heels of the distracted remnant, and were making hitherward. And presently I saw the Scottish cavalry dash helter-skelter down the narrow streets and cross the Bridge, to disappear beyond the slopes of Stockton Heath. But the infantry—four thousand strong—were not permitted to escape so easily. The Roundheads, as the night was falling, pounced upon them in their flight, and they were so completely cowed by their misfortunes that they readily surrendered on the bald condition that their lives were spared. Great gloom fell on the loyal folk of whom the place was full, and that black night the Cavaliers in Warrington had heavy hearts, and many of their rose-lipped daughters dewy eyes. The forces of the victor, naturally much elated by the issue of the fight, waxed garrulous and boastful now ; and many a peaceful citizen was filled with a great sense of awe to hear, in every street and tavern of the town, the flushed and heated victors telling—with full many a Bible epithet—how God had given the Philistines into their hands.

As it grew dusk, I found myself in front of an old house which almost faced the former dwel-

CROMWELL'S LODGINGS.

ling of the Earl. It was a similar building. Two thatched and narrow gables rose like tiny hillocks from its ancient roof. A low, arched door, irregularly placed between three lower windows, gave admission to the low but comfortable rooms within. Behind it I could see great boughs of waving foliage, whilst, beyond a gutter fringed with vegetation, a troop of Roundheads kept unceasing guard. I managed to make friends with one of them who kept the door, and stepped with cautious feet inside. In a quaint and gloomy chamber I could see a singularly striking figure seated at a table, with two rushlights flickering in front of him. Even in the semi-darkness I could easily make out the outlines of a great, square, resolute, and most commanding face, disfigured by some ugly warts ; of a pair of penetrating eyes ; of a stern lip, barely fringed with hair ; and of the short curls which descended carelessly about a massive pair of shoulders. His limbs, encased in great jack-boots, were carelessly extended underneath the oaken table, and on this a mighty sword was laid, whilst in his leather belt I thought I saw the gleam of pistols. Two silent men-at-arms stood by the door, and on the table I observed that there were pens, and

ink, and paper. The stern and silent figure seized a quill, and then sat down to write; and, as I watched, from where I stood within the shade, the great, strong fingers tracing out the pregnant words, I seemed to know instinctively what he was writing:

"Warrington, August 20, 1648.

"To the Speaker of the House of Commons. . . . "The next morning the enemy marched towards Warrington and we at the heels of them. We could not engage the enemy until we came within three miles of Warrington, and there they made a stand at a pass near Winwick. We held them in some dispute until our army was come up, they maintaining the pass with great resolution for many hours; but our men by the blessing of God charged very home upon them, beat them from their standing, where we killed about 1,000 of them, and took, as we believe, about 2,000 prisoners, and prosecuted them home to Warrington town, where they possessed the bridge. As soon as we came thither I received a letter from Lieutenant-general Bailey, desiring some capitulation; to which I yielded, and gave him these terms:—That he should surrender

"himself and all his officers and soldiers prisoners of war, with all his arms, ammunition and horses, upon quarter for life, which accordingly is done. Here are took about 4,000 compleat arms, and as many prisoners, and thus you have their infantry ruined. The duke is marched with his remaining horse, (which are about 3,000) towards Namptwich, where the gentlemen of the country have taken about 500 of them; the country will scarce suffer any of them to pass, but bring in and kill divers as they light upon them. I have sent post to my Lord Grey, and Sir Edward Roades, to gather altogether with speed for their prosecution; Monroe is about Cumberland with the horse that ran away, and his Irish foot; but I have left a considerable strength, I hope, to make resistance, till we can come up to them. Thus you have the narrative of the particulars of the success. I could hardly tell how to say less, there being so much of God, and I was not willing to say more, lest there should seem to be anything of man; only give me leave to add one word, shewing the disparity of the forces of both sides, that so you may see and all the world acknowledge the great hand of God in this busines. The Scots army could not be less than

"12,000 foot well armed, and 5,000 horse; Langdale not less than 2,500 foot and 1,500 horse; in all 21,000: In ours, in all, about 8,600; and by computation about 2,000 of the enemy's slain, betwixt 8,000 and 9,000 prisoners, besides what are lurking in hedges and private places, which the country daily bring in or destroy.

"Your very humble

"OLIVER CROMWELL."

One other letter the Protector penned, addressing it to "The Honble. the Committee at Yorke," supplying lurid details of the flight which followed the great struggle, and narrating how the Duke had fled into Delamere Forest, and how, were not his horses so fatigued, he might have captured all; how they had done great execution on the road for thirty miles together, besides the number slain in the two great fights, "the one at Preston, the other at Warrington," and urging them, in every place, "to gather into bodies and pursew." In this communication, he increased his estimate of the Scotch forces to no less than four and twenty thousand as against the nine who followed him;

put the prisoners at ten thousand; and declared that the "greatest parte by far of the nobeillitie of Scotland" were with the unfortunate "Duke Hambleton."

Three days did Cromwell tarry in "the good old town," and, ere he went, assembling his victorious troops upon *Pyghull*, dismissed the mighty company of Scottish prisoners. I saw them all defiling, with dejected faces, down the narrow lane which ran below the hill and joined the way which led by *Longforthe* to the north, amid the jeers of their elated conquerors; and from that day the thoroughfare was known to all men by the name of Scotland Road.

And then the rumour came that Charles had died like a true king in front of the great hall at Westminster, and that the younger Charles had since been crowned at Scone; and I was privileged to see him pass this way, with Buckingham, and David Lesley, the Scotch general, and a goodly company of Scottish followers, resolved to proudly place him on the vacant Throne. It happened

1649.

1651.

on this wise. Upon the 15th of August, a Cromwellian leader, Colonel Danvers, wrote from Warrington "to the Lord President Bradshaw" to intimate that he had just united there with Major-General Harrison; that, between them, they could boast 8000 horse, 1000 dragoons, and about 3000 foot; that they proposed to remain till Cromwell (who was then in the vicinity of Barnard Castle) had been able to bring up his infantry; that many of the folks of the adjoining counties had already joined them; and that, meantime, the invading force was lying "in a forlorn and wretched condition," and "rather decreasing than at all increasing," somewhere between the neighbouring towns of Wigan and Preston. And, two days before, the Major-General had himself explained how, after marching here from Bolton, they had done their best to spoil "the fords and passes on the river," leaving only those at which, if Charles's friends were rash enough to seek to cross, they might be most effectually met, not doubting that, if they were "clearly called" to give them battle ere the great Lord-General came, their "hearts" would once again be "filled with a heavenly power from the Lord, and they would see his

"antient arm lifted up, as in former times against his enemies." A few, less confident, had strongly counselled a withdrawal, but the general disposition manifestly was "to press to engage them, if the Lord should vouchsafe an open field for it."

And now the enemy approached, and I beheld the "Merrie Monarch" riding proudly at the head of his blithe soldiers—his life-guards in the van—and gaily rallying Lesley on his downcast countenance. "How can you be so dolorous," quoth he, "when you are with the head of so brave an army?" And certainly, as the King said, they looked extremely well that day. But Lesley, who, throughout the march, had been most [1]"sad and melancholy," riding often by himself, and seeming slow in giving orders even when the enemy showed signs of flight, was not to be aroused from his despondent mood. The two were riding quietly along together, at some short distance from the rest, and, as they passed me, I distinctly heard the canny Scotchman mutter grimly in the monarch's ear: "They may look weel; but I ken weel that they winna

1 Lord Clarendon's "History of the Rebellion."

"feight!" The King, however, was in great high spirits, and attributed it all to his ill-humour, laughingly reproving him for his want of faith; and, verily, it seemed, at first, as though His Majesty were right, for, as the Royalists approached, the Roundheads suddenly withdrew, and, on their own admission, "made more haste than a well-ordered retreat requires." But this, they subsequently claimed, was mainly due to mere strategic reasons. The grounds in the immediate neighbourhood were so enclosed as to prevent the evolutions of their horse; and these, accordingly, had ridden rapidly ahead, a single company remaining [1] "to amuse the enemy," or, in other words, dispute the passage of the Bridge and Ford. For an hour and a half they kept them well in check; then, finding that the Scots began to press them somewhat, the commander of the foot considered it expedient to retire. At this, the army of the King, with horse and foot, rushed forward and assailed their rear, and, two miles beyond the town, a furious company of Scottish horse bore down upon them, crying loudly as they came: "O, you rogues, we will

1 "The Perfect Diurnal"; Civil War Tracts, 291.

"be with you before Cromwell gets up!" But the Roundheads retaliated with amazing vigour, drove them back in sore confusion on two other bodies of their troops, who instantly fell foul of them, and followed them in hot pursuit at least a mile, their leader, Major Crawford, being killed, and loudly crying "Wea worth England!" as he fell. Then, marching on two miles or so, they formed another rear-guard out of Col. Riche's regiment, at which the Scotchmen, led by Buckingham and Lesley, and, some said, the King himself, once more assailed them, and were once again repelled, the victors afterwards proceeding unmolested right to *Knotsford* Heath, a place where they could use their cavalry with more effect, and whither they expected to be swiftly followed by the baffled foe. But, instead of this, the king and his supporters marched [1] "a good part of the night" upon "the London road." The Duke of Hamilton, indeed, was fain to make direct for the metropolis, as Lambert feared, but, against his better judgment, ultimately yielded to the wishes of his English allies. I

1 Letter from Major-General Harrison, to the President, dated August 17, 1651. "Parliamentary History."

found that Lambert's forces had been harried not a little as they came to reconnoitre, earlier in the day, down Latchford Causeway, by a body of Royalists ambushed in *Hell-Holes*, near Thelwall; and, in spite of the successes which his army claimed, the fact remained that their opponents had not only crossed the river, but successfully compelled them to withdraw from Warrington. The triumph was, however, merely momentary, for three weeks were not to pass ere Lesley's black prognostications had been all confirmed, and Cromwell's "Ironsides" had driven the army of the King before them, on the field of Worcester, as the chaff is driven before the storm.

But this and many other matters I can merely mention; nor will space permit me to describe, in detail, how, some three days after Charles had left the town, once more the gallant Earl of Derby came to it, attended by a number of loyal subjects from the Isle of Man, and, meeting the chief citizens in the Court House, begged them to lay by their differences, and join him in the high cause of the Second Charles; and how they to a man refused unless the Earl would take the Covenant, and put away his Papist following;

how, finding all his efforts fruitless, he declared that he should do his best [1] "with the handful of gentlemen" who were with him, and added nobly, ere he went: "If I perish, I perish; but if my master suffer, the blood of another prince and all the ensuing miseries of this nation will lie at your doors;" and how, when next I saw the luckless nobleman, he was passing through our ancient streets to meet the same fate as the fallen King.

And then the mighty Cromwell was **1653.** installed Protector, and for several melancholy years the gaiety of "Merrie England" and "the good old town" seemed nipped as by some bitter frost. The May-poles in the neighbouring villages were all hewn down, the play tabooed, the cock-pits closed, and even the game of bowls prohibited, until it seemed as though all forms of happiness had suddenly become a crime. But nothing could repress the latent geniality of my good fellow-townsfolk, and, despite the sombre garb affected by its fair-faced damsels, I could still discern the light of love and mischief in their eyes; and in the woods of

1 "House of Stanley."

Bewsey, and by the winding borders of the silver river, and among the ferns and fox-gloves near the ancient meeting-house upon the hill, I often saw "More Trial" Garnetts whispering sweet nothings to "Marfellous" Dunbabins, or "Praise God" Caldwells listening with willing ears whilst "Reformation" Faircloughs told the old sweet tale. Then, for the first time, Warrington possessed a postmaster; and, instead of the old wood and plaster houses which imparted to the place so quaint a look, brick buildings rose, and, presently, with red-faced boldness, pushed their ancient comrades on one side; whilst, in the numerous taverns of the town—for even Cromwell could not wholly quell the native thirst—I sometimes heard them singing, with a touch of satire, perhaps:

1 "I freely declare if I am for old Noll,
Tho' his rule did a tyrant's resemble,
For he made England great and her enemies tremble."

And so, indeed, I freely own he did, as even those admitted who were most opposed to him. But, on the 3rd September, 1658, this mighty Englishman at last expired. It had been hither-

1 Thomas Hollis.

to a day of happy omen. Upon it he had seen the light for the first time; upon it he had routed Charles at Worcester with tremendous slaughter; and now, upon the morrow of a mighty storm, the strenuous fighter

"passed
To where beyond these voices there is peace."

The civic turmoil ended, in the following year, at Winnington, at which **1659.** the Royalists—led by Sir George Booth, who had repented of his earlier tendencies—were driven helter-skelter over hedge and ditch, brave Thomas *Leigh*, of *Bruch*, escaping but to reach his home and die, as one described it, like a stricken deer; Sir George himself, disguised in female garments, managing to ride off, pillion-wise, to be afterwards discovered in dismounting, and despatched incontinently to the Tower. And then the Restoration **1660.** came, and he received his liberty, his son becoming Chancellor of the Exchequer in King William's time, obtaining the high title, [1] "Earl of Warrington" (1690), and leav-

1 The heir of the first Earl—another George—died without issue, and the title became extinct; but it was revived,

ing as his legacy some sapient counsels to his children, with various other disquisitions which are full of wisdom, and are worth the world's regard to-day.

In these and in the following years I naturally witnessed many incidents which greatly interested me, and some which had their humorous side. For instance, I was one day in a local "steeple house," and, when the clergyman had finished his discourse, to my surprize, observed a Quaker, Thomas Briggs, get calmly up and seek to supplement the sermon by some curious comments of his own. But they were evidently not by any means acceptable to those who heard, for the aforesaid Quaker was knocked very violently on the head, and, not content with this, a man abruptly seized him by the hair, and, after smiting him against a stone, pulled out a handful. But the Quaker was obedient to the traditions of his sect, for, much to everyone's astonishment, he mildly took it from the ground again, and

in 1796, and coupled with the name of Stamford by right of the marriage of one of the Greys, who were Earls of Stamford, with the daughter and heiress of Sir George.

THE PLAGUE HOUSE.

(A) *Position of Plague Stone.*

softly said : [1] "Not one hair of my head shall fall without my Master's permission!"

The Rector, Robert Yates, who had, **1662.** in 1649, been tried for his life at Lancaster for refusing [2] "to be true and faithful to the commonwealth as then established without a king or house of lords," and owed his pardon solely to his judge's clemency, and who, in 1659, had joined Sir George in his rebellion, was now ejected from his living under what was known as the Bartholemew Act, becoming thereupon the earliest pastor of the Presbyterian church which holds the special licence of the King and worships to this day in Cairo Street.

And, three years afterwards, the **1665.** Plague appeared again, and, at a certain house in Wash Lane, Latchford, I could see the inmates coming stealthily to take from a safe distance the provisions left for them, and then depositing the due coins of the realm, immersed in vinegar and water, in a hole within the coping of the garden wall. I saw

1 "History of the Quakers."

2 Adam Martindale.

1672. the Quakers first begin to regularly meet in Warrington at the abode of one **1675.** Rebecca Nield, and, three years later, heard their leader, George Fox, preaching in the town to an increasing company. About this time, I noticed that a legacy, left, in 1665, by a Mr. Allen, of Westminster, [1] "to put out severall poore boys at 14 years old to Apprenticeships to some handicraft trade," had duly **1677.** vested; was applied to this and other charitable purposes; and ultimately grew so much in value that, with later benefactions, it sufficed to found the Bluecoat School. "The Blews," as I was afterwards to learn, at first assembled in a building at the back of Trinity (1711), removing to their present spacious home in 1782. I also watched the **1682.** Duke of Monmouth riding over *Stoaken Heath*, where many of the good folks of the neighbourhood had flocked to meet him; and, later still, I gazed with awe **1684.** upon the black Judge Jeffreys (whose mother was, I found, a sister of the second

1 "The Origin and History of the Warrington Blue Coat School." By John Bowes.

THE PARISH CHURCH.

Sir Thomas Ireland) as he held his court at Bewsey Hall; observed with pleasure the formation of an institution for the **1697.** purpose of affording help to the widows and clergymen of the three dioceses of Chester, Liverpool, and Manchester; saw Bishop Wilson, once a Newchurch curate, come to Warrington again to wed a daughter of the Pat- **1698.** ten family, and link his name in pleasing fellowship with theirs, and listened to him many a Sunday in the grand old Parish Church; and several times met Matthew Henry, the great commentator, in his frequent visits **1704.** to my native place. I stood at Market Gate, and watched Lord Derwentwater, **1715.** after the defeat at Preston, ride, a prisoner, through the town, on a white horse; and saw four rebels, who had been condemned at Liverpool, brought hither pinioned, with their legs securely tied beneath the bellies of their steeds, a hardy smith, who seemed to be their leader, and whose comrades called him Captain Siddall, boldly calling out, as he passed through the town, that he would give the Rump one huzza at Manchester before he was quartered. And, ere the curtain finally des-

cended on the tragic drama of the Civil War, I saw two hundred rebels who had come to
1745. reconnoitre and contrived to cross the Ford, surprized and captured by the gallant "Blues" from Liverpool, who crowned their services by pulling down the central arches of the Bridge to bar "Prince Charlie's" progress towards the south, a wise precaution which did much to thwart his daring plans, and to extinguish the last smouldering ashes of a flame which had devoured the land and much disturbed the town for a full century.

THE BRIDGE.

"THE ATHENS OF ENGLAND."

CHAPTER V.

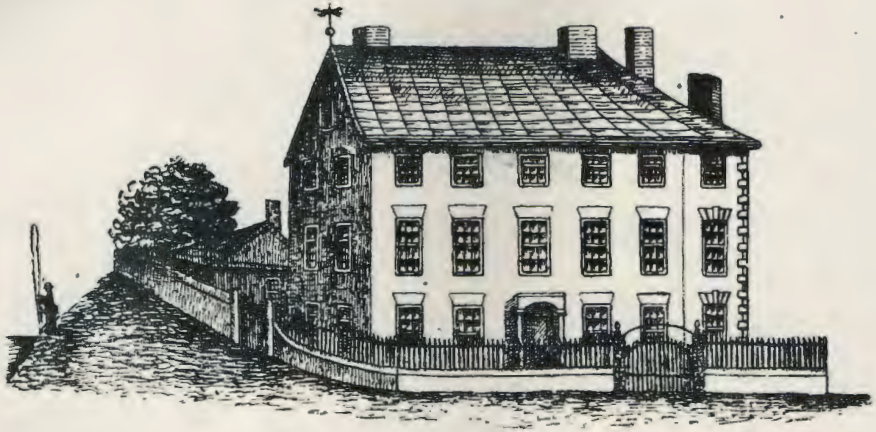
"THE ATHENS OF ENGLAND."

1757. Once more the inexorable years revolved, and once again I found myself upon the Bridge. I scarcely knew it. There were still four arches, but the battlements had been provided with recesses for the safety of pedestrians, and on the central pier another watch-house was erected, with a dismal dungeon in its basement. Looking up the river towards the left, I saw a crowd of fisher-folk all busy with their nets and boats. A ferry-boat was crossing lazily in the vicinity of some small mills below the Weir. Green meadows, lined with picturesque and comfortable houses, lay upon the northern bank, with leafy trees at intervals, and none of those great chimneys which to-day disfigure and defile the air. In the distance, I could see an edifice in which I recognized the Church, its battered tower restored, and ending in a leaden cupola. The Latchford side was decked

with buttercups and grazing kine, and near the river stood a church which had been dedicated to St. James, and boasted a conspicuous spire. No hideous abortion of a railway bridge shut out the view across the Arpley Meadows to the sunny uplands of Hill Cliff—there were not any railways then—but, even as I gazed, a stage-coach passed in front of me, with foaming steeds and sounding horn, to an old hostelry a trifle higher up the road. *Bonck Strete* had assumed its later name, but was still a pleasant byway bending past the ancient spring towards the Church. And, a little distance from the Bridge, at the extremity of Bridge Street (for the name of this quaint thoroughfare had also changed), pre-eminent amid a crowd of humbler shops and houses, many still of wood and plaster, and picturesque as in the olden time, there stood a great red mansion which arrested my attention suddenly and held it. And to my lips instinctively there rose the words :

1 " Mark where its simple front yon mansion rears,
The nursery of men for future years :
Here callow chiefs and embryo statesmen lie,
And unfledg'd poets short excursions try :

1 "The Invitation." By Anna Lætitia Aikin (Mrs. Barbauld).



THE ACADEMY IN 1757.

"While Mersey's gentle current, which too long
By fame neglected, and unknown to song,
Between his rushy banks, (no poet's theme)
Had crept inglorious, like a vulgar stream,
Reflects th' ascending seats with conscious pride,
And dares to emulate a classic tide."

Even as I gazed at the old house I saw a straight and stately person with decisive features and a Roman nose, who was apparently well on for seventy, walk up to the stone porch and enter with an air of some authority. I did not need to ask his name. It was the famous [1] Dr. Taylor, founder of the Norwich family of whom well-nigh each member would be more or less distinguished in his turn—the earliest Academy tutor, and the author of a "Hebrew Concordance" which had won the patronage of thirty-seven bishops, barbed the witty shafts of Burns, and been described as a durable monument of the worthy doctor's industry, and one of the most laborious and useful works ever published for the advancement of Hebrew knowledge and the understanding the text of the Old Testament in the original language. He had come from his residence in Buttermarket Street

1 In Warrington 1757 to 1761.

to pour forth to the students from the treasure-house of his capacious memory "things new and old," and I felt the awe which generally animates the average layman in the presence of such actual "bodies of divinity."

Scarcely had he disappeared within the doorway when I saw another form approaching, with a look of such abstraction in his face as to evoke from me the instant and involuntary cry :[1] "John Holt!" And John Holt indeed it was, the mathematical tutor, [2] "a man of remarkably "mild and gentle manners, and of an equanimity almost unparalleled, insomuch that he appears to have been scarcely capable of emotions, at least of any violent kind," and who was so wrapped up in his science as to have gradually degenerated into "a sort of reasoning automaton."

Immediately upon his heels there came a man upon the younger side of fifty, with a profile which reminded me of Wesley, and a singularly kind and clever face; and, as I looked, some

1 In Warrington 1757 to 1772.

2 "Historical Account of the Warrington Academy," by V. F., in "Monthly Repository."

THE ALCOVE.

(Two Views.)

sudden memory surged up within me, and I softly murmured, [1]"Dr. Aikin."

At first I had not noticed that he was accompanied by a singularly graceful girl, who was verging on the choicest of her teens, whose figure [2] "was slender," whose "complexion exquisitely fair, with the bloom of perfect health," whose "features were regular and elegant," and whose "dark blue eyes beamed with the light of wit and fancy." My interest in the grave and learned individuals who had disappeared within the building suddenly grew strangely less. I noticed that, instead of following the doctor, she had turned aside, with all the nimbleness of some young fawn, and disappeared within a pleasant garden full of fruit and flowers. I watched her skip, with graceful feet, up the rude steps which led to a small chamber in a curious arched Alcove, partially concealed with ivy. There, flinging off her hat, and letting the soft breezes dally with her silken hair, she seized a book, and read with eager eyes until some

1 In Warrington 1758 to 1780.

2 "The Works of Anna Lætitia Barbauld. With a Memoir by Lucy Aikin."

laughing damsels joined her, a youth who had just left the house approaching presently, and asking her, with many pretty compliments, if he might do the same. And, as I watched them unobserved, I seemed to see the silver glamour of the moonlight steeping the old garden and the ivied Alcove, and could hear the green leaves whispering:

[1]"This is sure the haunt of fairies,
In yon cool Alcove they play;
Care can never cross the threshold,
Care was only made for day.

* * * * *

"Choral songs and sprightly voices
Echo from her cell shall call;
Sweeter, sweeter than the murmur
Of the distant water fall.

"Every ruder gust of passion
Lull'd with music dies away,
Till within the charmed bosom
None but soft affections play:

"Soft, as when the evening breezes
Gently stir the poplar grove;
Brighter than the smile of summer,
Sweeter than the breath of love."

As I turned to leave, it grew broad day again,

1 "Verses written in an Alcove." By Anna Lætitia Aikin (Mrs. Barbauld).

and time had swiftly measured out five years. A student who was sauntering along a handsome terrace walk, which ran beside the green banks of the Mersey, told me that old Dr. Taylor had but lately died, "and yonder," he observed, "is his successor, [1]Dr. Priestley."

I doffed my hat with a becoming reverence, and watched the famous figure disappear without a word. And then I asked my comrade what this quaint old mansion, peopled with such learned folk, might mean; and very proudly he went on to tell me how the English Presbyterians had established here an institution supported by voluntary contributions, with the object of affording to the sons of Protestant Dissenters that higher education which the Universities, in their intolerance, refused. But here the law of liberty was paramount, he said, and there were several Churchmen on the books. As a matter of fact, they were out-growing their accommodation, and were, even now, erecting larger premises. He gave me many de- **1762.** tails as to his fellow-students, and waxed eloquent about the virtues of the earliest enrolled,

1 In Warrington 1761 to 1768.

a Warringtonian named Thomas Percival. Of young John Aikin, too—the gifted brother of the charming girl whom I had noticed in the Alcove—he had also much to tell; and I was not a little interested by his animated stores of John Palmer (whose career was destined to inspire the pen of Dr. Priestley); of Samuel Farr and Edward Rigby—each engaged in studying the healing art, and each to win an honourable name in it; of Philip Taylor, grandson of the recent tutor; of Samuel Aspinall, the patron, and the partner, in due course, of William Roscoe, as well as several other youths of striking promise who were daily seeking wisdom in the panelled rooms of this old house beside the river.

I wandered slowly on up Bridge Street, the years almost outspeeding me, and my companion having been succeeded by an intelligent-looking shopkeeper; and soon I passed a court in which I seemed to see, as in a dream, [1]the Rector founding his first Sunday School (1784), and the [2]Vicar of St. James's starting, in another build-

1 The Rev. Edward Owen. In Warrington 1757 to 1807.

2 The Rev. James Glazebrook. In Warrington 1780 to 1795.

ing, a still earlier Sunday School, on Easter Sunday, 1779, and thus anticipating even Robert Raikes in his beneficent design.

Within the yard of an adjacent hostelry, which bore the sign of the Bull's Head, my comrade pointed out a dial with the quaint inscription :

TIME IS PRECIOUS.

PETER WINSTANLEY ERECTED THIS DIAL 1756 ;

and, as I gazed on it, he told me that the donor had likewise erected, near his residence in Stanley Street, another dial with the similarly quaint inscription :

VIRTUE JOIN PRECIOUS TIME.

THE GIFT OF PETER WINSTANLEY TO THE PUBLICK IN STANLEY STREET WARRINGTON 1755."

This Peter, was, it seemed, the son of Hamlet Winstanley, the well-known painter and engraver, who had built the street, and named it after his principal patrons. In the same vicinity, I also saw two gabled houses nestling like a pair of ancient twins between two loftier and more pretentious red brick buildings, and fancied

that I noticed appetizing loaves in the small-paned window of one of them. And, just as we were passing it, I thought I saw a portly fellow, with a combative but scriptural cast of countenance, whose clothes were white with flour, and who wore, like nearly everyone we met, a formidable wig, come gravely to the doorway with a book in his hand. But I must have been deceived in this, for my companion suddenly exclaimed :

"That was formerly the residence of [1] John Macgowan. You will, no doubt, have read his 'Dialogues of Devils,' and other allegories, which, in some respects, will bear comparison with those of old John Bunyan, the immortal dreamer, himself. He has lately had a bout with Dr. Priestley, and has given him, some think, a slating. Several books of his have made more or less of a sensation, and, in one of them, which he humorously calls 'The Shaver,' he has castigated Oxford University for daring to expel six young men 'for holding Methodistical tenets, and for praying, reading, and expounding the Scriptures in a private house.'"

1 Left Warrington in 1759.

THE RESIDENCE OF JOHN MACGOWAN.

"THE OLDEST NONCONFORMIST MEETING-PLACE IN ENGLAND."

"Truly, a most heinous offence," I said, with a smile. "But how did the learned author find time to undertake all this and not neglect his baking?"

"Oh," he quickly answered, "he found time for more than that! Every Sunday he walked out across the common to the little Baptist Chapel at Hill Cliff, where rumour tells that Cromwell worshipped whilst a trooper preached, and which is said to be the oldest Nonconformist meeting-place in England. For Macgowan was not only a baker, an author, and a brilliant disputant, but a Baptist pastor, and a very able one indeed, I assure you. And, speaking of Hill Cliff," he said, "you may be interested to know that the Italian poet, [1] Alfieri, happens to be living there just now. He fell in love with Sir John Ligonier's wife, fought a duel with Sir John, and came to Belle Fields, in the pleasant hollow just behind the wood, as the result of it. Curious fellows, these poets! He is greatly charmed, I hear, with the views of the Mersey valley which he catches from his sylvan eyrie, and already the delightful pathway by the firs is known as Alfieri's walk."

1 In England 1770 to 1773.

He went on to tell me that the house was built by quaint old [1]Admiral Hoare (the original of "Commodore Trunnion," in "Peregrine Pickle") ; that he planned it on the model of a ship ; had his cabins in the quaint interior, and his quarter-deck upon the lawn outside ; addressed his visitors in nautical parlance, and timed his meals to the accustomed "bells," his movements being regulated by the weather, and a log-book indicating how the wind was blowing and the world about him rolling on its way. The celebrated landscape painter, Richard Wilson, often called "the English Claude Lorraine," had likewise been enamoured of Hill Cliff, he said, residing there, at intervals, in semi-poverty, and boldly claiming that the panorama visible from the old burial-ground was not excelled in all the length and breadth of Merrie England.

I was greatly interested in all these spicy bits of information, but my comrade had to leave me at this point, for we had reached the place in which he carried on his business.

If Bridge Street had its bakers and its parsons,

1 "Barthomley." By the Rev. Edward Hinchliffe.

THE RESIDENCE OF "LONGITUDE" HARRISON.

it was likewise singularly rich in its taverns. Nearly opposite Macgowan's shop, we had passed the Royal Oak, which dated back almost to the event from which it took its name; and now I came to the Red Lion, generally regarded as the principal hostelry in the town, which, however, boasted quite a menagerie of other lions—the Blue, the White, the Golden, and the Black! Here many a notable had sojourned pleasantly; here famous statesmen had addressed admiring crowds; and here the old fly wagons had been wont to stop, until those cumbrous vehicles, which only travelled some five miles an hour, had been succeeded by the picturesque stage coaches which were passing, in rapidly increasing numbers, through the ancient streets, until as many as fifty-four paused daily at some one or other of the venerable inns of which the place was full.

Almost in front of the Red Lion, I paused to scrutinize a neat, small house, with two prim gables in the roof, and four steps leading to a door divided in the middle.

"Warrington is quite renowned for its distinguished watchmakers," said another student,

who had just approached me, with a smile. "Not long ago, this was the residence of old [1]John Harrison, inventor of the compensating pendulum, who won, in 1767, the sum of £20,000 from the Government for finding a correcter mode of ascertaining longitude. At the other end of the town, there lately lived John Kay, another watch and clock maker. In conjunction with a Mr. Richard Arkwright, who resided for some time in Warrington, he invented the fly shuttle in the same year. And, in the humble house which probably you noticed just across the Bridge"—the years must once again have glided magically on—"dwells Peter Litherland, inventor of the patent lever watch. But even these are not the only horological inventors Warrington can boast, for, on the threshold of the Civil War, there saw the light in it a famous Benedictine monk called Edward Booth, or Barlow, as he dubbed himself, in honour of his godfather, a Benedictine monk of that name who died, at Lancaster, for his religion. This Booth, I have been told, read Euclid with as much avidity as a good story; was the first to make the pendulum watch and clock,

1 Harrison is mentioned in "Don Juan."

THE RESIDENCE OF PETER LITHERLAND.

"as well as the repeating watch; and left behind him several learned treatises on meteorology and other subjects."

"A very useful sort of monk indeed," said I, "and Warrington is doubtless proud of him."

"Alas," he said, "I fear she scarcely knows his name!"

We had passed, a little lower down the street, a small, but dignified, old building underneath an archway on the left which was said to have been the town house of the Earl of Warrington; and now, at the end of a narrow entry leading to the Eagle and Child—another hostelry which dated back into the middle of the previous century, and was a favourite haunt of "John Shadow," otherwise John Byrom, "poet and shorthand writer"—my comrade showed me a quaint building which had been the abode, till lately, of the famous "Pattens of the Lane."

And suddenly my thoughts took wing again, and, in imagination, I could see the beautiful Miss Bover holding there her gracious court—a lady who, like sweet Lætitia Aikin, had a mind

which matched her face; a face which the great painter, Opie, had perpetuated; and, amongst her crowd of worshippers, [1] a real Prince! Was that the fascinating damsel who had just gone by, reclining gracefully in a sedan chair, or had I caught a fleeting vision of the Queen of Love herself? And was it fancy, or the wind, which murmured in my ear:

> "Blow soft ye winds, ye waters cease to move,
> Lo! Bover comes, the sweetest child of love,
> Blest with a form all harmony and grace,
> While heav'n's own goodness brightens in her face.
> Adorn'd with every grace that virtue gives,
> Ador'd and innocent her virtue lives;
> If sense and beauty claim a mortal's care,
> Let wond'ring millions guard this matchless fair.
> All heav'n to form her matchless frame combin'd,
> And make her loveliest of the lovely kind;
> Each power to deck her all their skill employ'd,
> Stamp'd her divine, and then the die destroy'd."?

My comrade suddenly recalled me from my reverie—if such it were—by gently nudging me upon the arm, and saying, as we turned once more into the narrow thoroughfare which led to Market Gate:

1 Prince William, of Gloucester, the commandant of the northern district.

"Look, there is John Howard, the philanthropist! He is off to Eyres' Press, with a bundle of corrected proofs beneath his arm!"

And, glancing in the direction indicated, I saw, emerging from the house of Mrs. Wilde, a silversmith, three doors from Dolman's Lane, [1] "the best man, if not the most elegant writer, in England"—"the patriot of every clime," to whose disinterested labours countless captives were to owe deliverance from sufferings worse than death.

"He came to Warrington in 1777," said my companion, "to print a book entitled 'The State of the Prisons in England and Wales,' attracted by the fame of our local press, of the work of which he had seen some specimens; by the opportunity it gave him of personally superintending the publication; and, no doubt, to some extent, by reason of the learned circle who have gradually congregated here, and won for Warrington its latest and its proudest title, 'the Athens of England.' In order to assist him in his project, Mr. Eyres selected his most trusted

1 Dr. Aikin in a letter to his sister.

"compositor, who devoted the whole of his time to the work. Mr. Howard is now (1780) engaged in publishing an appendix to his book. He rises every morning at two o'clock, regardless of the weather, and, after his cold bath, devotes himself to the revision of the printer's sheets, considering this the stillest portion of the day. At seven he dons his dress and eats his frugal breakfast. At eight he goes to the printing works, where he remains till one. He has probably just been into his lodgings for some bread and raisins, which he will eat as he walks, with meditative feet, in some secluded suburb of the town. His drink is water. Occasionally he will call upon a friend—though his acquaintances are few—but he usually spends the best part of the afternoon at the printer's, and, when the men leave work, strolls calmly to young Dr. Aikin's, where he mainly spends his evenings, the doctor having very kindly promised to assist him in the task of collating and revising his notes. At ten he takes a cup of tea or coffee and retires to rest."

And, as I saw the grave and thoughtful figure quietly emerge again and make towards Market Gate, unconsciously I doffed my hat and said :

THE DWELLING OF THE DOLEMAN.

1 "But thou—mild benefactor—thou
To whom on earth were given
The sympathy for others' woe;
The charities of heaven;
Pity for grief; a fever balm,
Life's ills and agonies to calm—
To tell that thou hast striven!
Thou hast thy records which surpass
Or storying stone or sculptured brass."

We turned into a yard off Dolman's Lane to see a fine old wood and plaster house which probably, in earlier times, had been the dwelling of the Doleman (or distributor of alms at funerals), and given its curious title to this singularly narrow thoroughfare, and then proceeded on our way up Bridge Street.

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1 These lines are by Jeremiah Holmes Wiffen, who is supposed to have received a portion of his education, or, at any rate, to have been a visitor, at the Quakers' School, Penketh. It may be added that Penketh educated Dr. John Coakley Lettsom, the eminent physician, who was one of the founders of the Royal Humane Society, and has been immortalized in the sarcastic epigram:

"When patients for my help apply,
I physics, bleeds, and sweats 'em;
If after that they choose to die,
Why, die they must—*J. Lettsom.*"

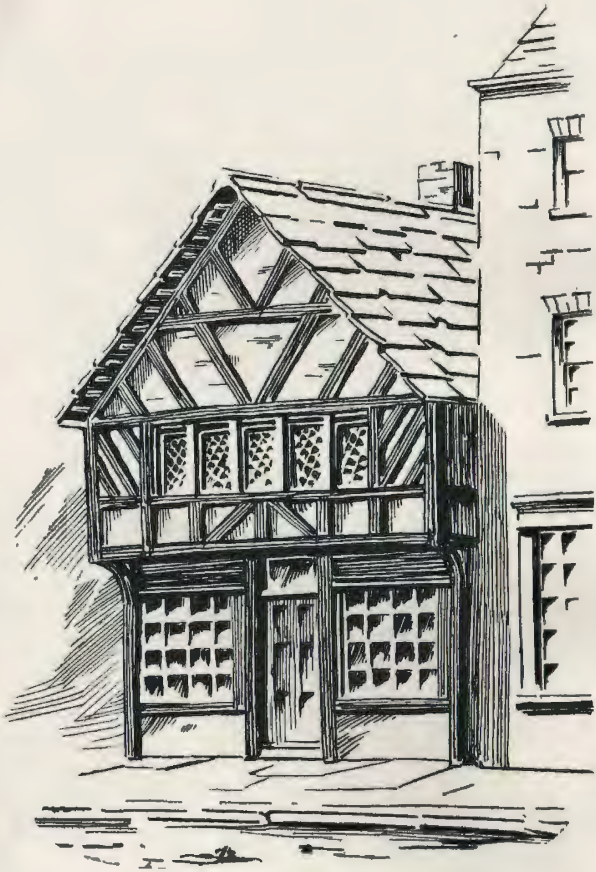
Penketh likewise claims to have assisted in the education of John Bright.

It was Wednesday, and, a little further on, I found the narrow streets all lined with fruit, and eggs, and butter, and vegetables, and the other luscious produce of the two adjacent counties. Up nearly every alley I descried an inn, and one of them, the Golden Fleece, was pointed out to me as once the favourite resort of Tim Bobbin.

> "Capricious fortune, that blind jade,
> Hath blown Tim Bobbin hither;
> Do not forget the pledge we made,
> That here we'd drink together,"

said my friend, who had, I found, a happy knack of apt quotation. Tim's real name, he told me, was John Collier; his native place was Hollins Green; and I listened with amused attention as he smilingly reeled off the following extract from his autobiography:

"He's Lancashire born, and all his acquaintance, his wife not excepted, agree that he's an odd fellow. . . In the reign of Queen Anne he was a boy and one of the nine children of a poor curate in Lancashire, whose stipend never amounted to thirty pounds a year, and consequently the family must feel the iron teeth of



THE BIRTHPLACE OF DR. BARNES.

"penury with a witness. These indeed were sometimes blunted by the charitable disposition of the good rector" (the Rev. Mr. Haddon, of Warrington). "So this Tim Bobbin lived as some other boys did, content with water pottage, buttermilk, and jannock, till he was between thirteen and fourteen years of age, when providence began to smile upon him in his advancement to a pair of Dutch looms, when he met with treacle to his pottage, and sometimes a little in his buttermilk or spread on his jannock."

There was quite a crowd round Market Gate. The men were attired in knee-breeches, with buckles on the knees and shoes; the middle-aged and elderly wore coats with full skirts and pleats in them, the pockets having ornamental flaps outside. Their wigs and pigtails, usually surmounted by three-cornered hats, were much in evidence, whilst many of them bore gold-headed canes. But they seemed to harmonize with their surroundings, and I felt that it was I who looked uncongruous.

We turned up Sankey Street, and saw, upon the right, a small, half-timbered house where Corporation Street now leads towards the Market

Place. Here [1]Thomas Barnes, a former student at the Academy, who had already won distinction for his native town, was born, my friend remarked, in 1747.

A little higher up, upon the other side, immediately beyond an old inn called the Woolpack—one of several whose names appeared familiar—was Percival's, or Pewcill's, Lane ; and here, between two tiny houses as like as two apples, rose a tall and stately red brick mansion, backed by orchards and by gardens stretching out as far as I could see.

"Dr. Percival, the earliest student enrolled at the Academy, first saw the light in this big house" (1740), my comrade said. "He will soon be one of the most famous medical men in the Kingdom. He and Barnes have lately founded the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society." And, as he spoke, I thought I heard a solemn voice repeating quietly : [2]"An

1 First Principal of the Manchester Academy.

2 This tribute is from the pen of Dr. Magee, Archbishop of Dublin, who was formerly a curate at Sankey, and married a Miss Moulson, of Warrington.

THE BIRTHPLACE OF DR. PERCIVAL.

A N. E. View of the TOWN of Warrington from a HOUSE near St Athernus Quay

Gate, we turned abruptly up a narrow entry known as Barsley's Wynt—in which two folks could scarcely pass—and found ourselves within "the great square of the town," in other words, the Market Place. It was divided down the centre by a row of narrow houses, known as the Mid-feather, into the Great and Little Arm. Other houses similar in character stood all about the square, a number of them built of wood and plaster, with painted windows, wainscotted rooms, and projecting gables. The northern portion boasted several very handsome houses, and was bounded by a line of these bedecked with clambering vines. It was my ancient friend, *Pratte Row.* I recognized the Barley Mow at once, and found that it was built in 1661 ; and, just against it, to the right, I saw another structure, not less picturesque, which bore above its portals the Legh Arms, the letters "W.P.," and the date, 1657.

"Here William Patten lived, and represented worthily another branch of the same family, 'the Pattens of the Market,'" was the comment of my interesting comrade as we paused admiringly.

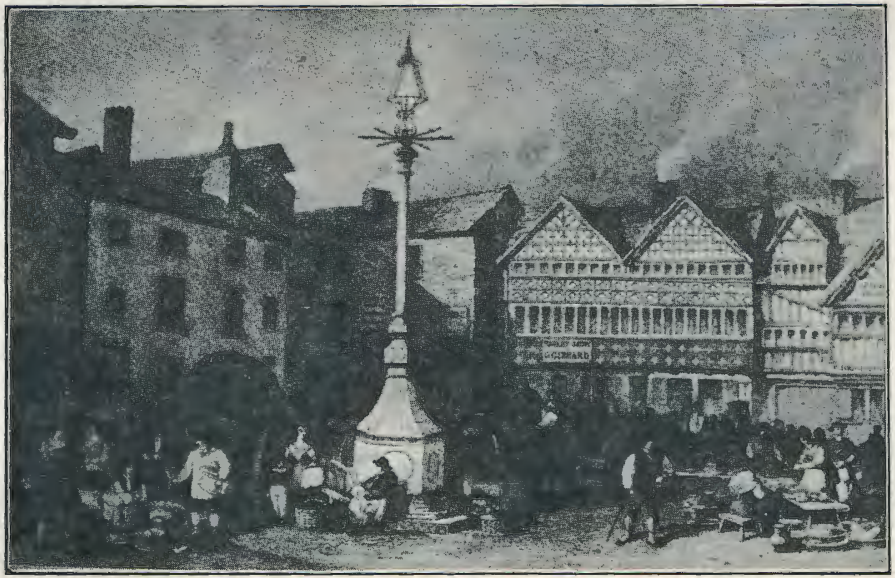
Directly to the left of the Barley Mow

"author without vanity, a philosopher without pride, a scholar without pedantry, a Christian without guile—affable in his manners, courteous in his conversation, dignified in his deportment, cheerful in his temper, warm in his affections, steady in his friendship, mild in his resentments, and unshaken in his principles—the grand object of his life was usefulness, and the grand spring of all his actions was religion."

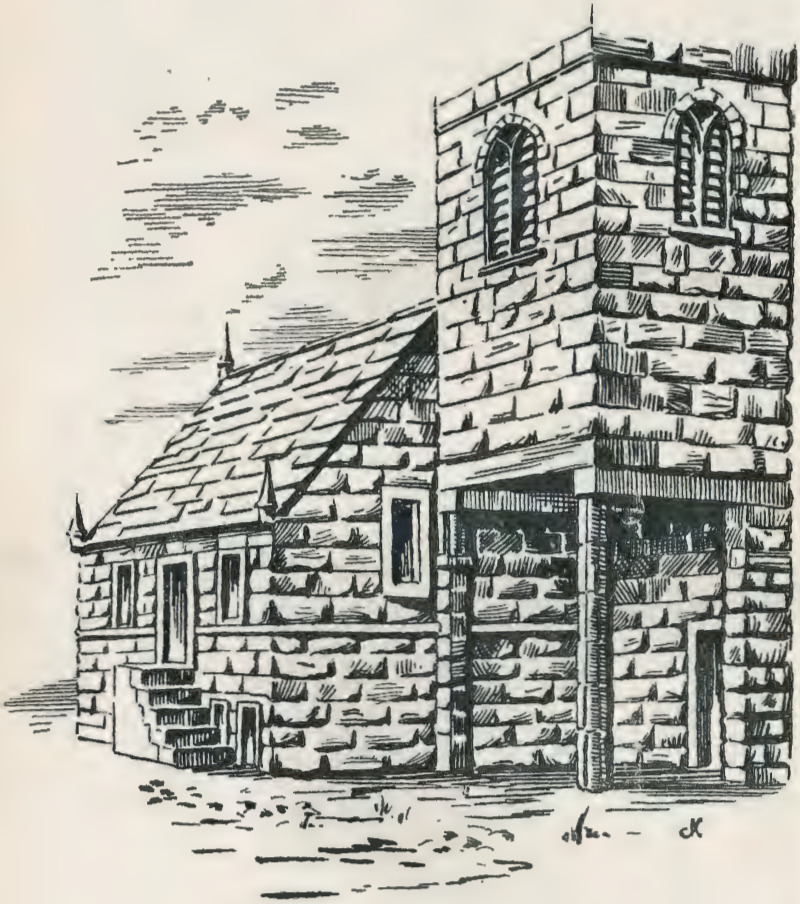
We walked a little further, noticing, upon our left, a spacious stretch of meadows running to the river and the hills beyond, and, on the right, amid a pleasant park, a new and handsome mansion, which, I found, was now the habitation of the "Pattens of the Lane." It had been erected, it seemed, about the middle of the century, [1]a traveller who was passing through the town in 1750 stating that he noticed Thomas Patten building his new mansion (with the help of Gibbs, the famous architect), and laying its foundations solidly on copper slag, cast into moulds and set like masonry.

Then, making once again towards Market

1 Dr. Richard Peacocke (afterwards Bishop of Ossory.)



THE MARKET PLACE.



THE COURT HOUSE.

was a mansion of red brick, with quaint stone quoins, and Pegasus, the winged steed, and Arion, on his dolphin, and a couple of griffins, and a somewhat lamb-like lion among the rest.

"This house dates back to 1682," he said. "It was intended to receive Prince Charlie on his way towards the south, in 1745, had not his plans been foiled by the destruction of the Bridge. He actually came clandestinely to Bewsey, which, a little while before, had been the scene of a great fire, so recently as 1760, but had to leave his meal unfinished, and make off post haste to safer quarters."

I also noticed, in the lesser market, on the south-east side, a curious low building of red stone. It was approached by a flight of stone steps, had clumsy carvings on its outer walls, and was flanked, at its southern corner, by a square stone tower, supported by two stone pillars, with a recess beneath. This was the ancient Court House, which has been already mentioned, and here, a venerable townsman told us, he could well remember seeing several brawny Highland prisoners eating oatmeal porridge on the floor, about the time the Bridge was made impassable.

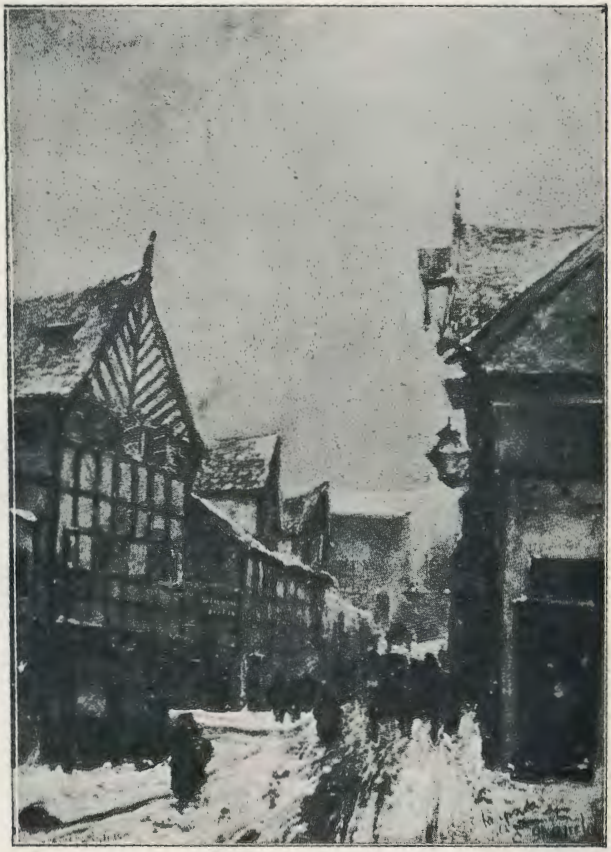
Returning through Cheapside, remarkable for picturesque old buildings, we emerged in Horse-market, almost exactly opposite a house which much resembled in its general effect the Barley Mow ; but this, at least, was not a tavern, for over its low doors I read the magic words :

"WILLIAM EYRES, PRINTER."

And, even as I looked, I saw John Howard slowly entering, and talking gravely to a genial fellow with a sloping brow, a thoughtful face, and eyes of rare intelligence, who stood behind the counter, and who, with pardonable pride, was showing Howard the last production of his press.

"I know Eyres well," my comrade whispered. "Come with me and I will introduce you."

I followed him, and found myself inside a quaint, low room, with curious chap-books ("Jack the Giant Killer," "Tom Hickathrift," "Fair Rosamond," "Simple Simon," and many more of the same kind) and a variety of other publications in the window ; whilst on the counter lay a copy of *Eyres' Weekly Journal, or, The Warrington Advertizer* (1756), which was decorated with a curious woodcut of a horseman dashing hastily



CHEAPSIDE.

EYRES' PRESS.

WOOD-CUTS FROM "EYRES' WEEKLY JOURNAL."

across the ancient four-arched bridge, and with another of a noble vessel in full sail.

"This is a copy of his weekly paper," said my friend in an undertone, "supposed to be one of the first that was published in Lancashire. It was, however, really the joint production of Eyres and of his brother Henry, who were then in partnership. Unluckily, it only lived a few short months."

"Is this the earliest local printing-press?" I ventured to enquire.

"Not quite," he said. "Our records show that Warrington could boast a *bookseller* named Robert Booth, in 1648; another known as Pickering in 1663; a Hodgkinson in 1675; in 1676, a Denby; a Burton in 1690; and, in 1704, a Cliffe. A short time afterwards, a work was issued with the title: 'Spiritual Wickedness in High Places; or, the Corruption and Oppression in the Spiritual Courts Laid Open, in the case of Peter Slynehead, of the parish of Prescot, in the county of Lancaster and diocese of Chester, London: Printed by R. Tookey, and are to be sold by H. *Eires*, bookseller in Warrington, 1704, Price 6d.' Two later pamphlets by the aforesaid

"Peter bore the same strange imprint. Slynehead, I may tell you, was the last of a worthy family of yeomen who lived at Slynehead's Green, not far from Warrington. In consequence of these outspoken pamphlets he was sent to the Fleet Prison, where he died. *Eires* was, as you will probably have guessed, the present printer's grandfather. A learned Presbyterian minister, Charles Owen, after this, sent forth from Warrington a multitude of controversial tracts and other literature, his last and greatest work, 'An Essay towards a Natural History of Serpents,' coming out in 1742. But it was to Eyres, the son of quaint old Henry, that we owed our earliest press, and a curious local broadside which he printed for a Mr. Richard Swanwick, to invite the local public to resist the payment of the usual tolls, upon the strength of charters granted centuries ago, is still in the possession of the family."

On well-arranged and handsome shelves I saw a glistening company of books, and, noticing the interest which I evinced in them, as Howard passed into an inner room, the famous printer, who had just approached us with a pleasant smile, took several down and showed them me.

The earliest was appropriately called "The Importance of Learning" (1760), and contained "a sermon Preached before an Assembly of Ministers at Manchester" by D. Holland. The next he showed me was a poem called "The Choice: a Pastoral Essay. Wrote in the Spring 1764, by T. Bird, Gent." This quaint old specimen of the "spring poet" lived at Blackbrook, Orford, and his book was mainly notable for one of several poetic compliments prefixed to it which ran as follows:

> "Of Pegasus (the Muse's boast),
> The ancients have averred
> He was a beast: but modern wits
> Pronounce he is a *Bird*."

There were various works by Dr. Taylor and Dr. Priestley, and one by the latter extremely notable—"The History and Present State of Electricity" (1767); there were lectures by [1] John Reinhold Forster, the great naturalist (1768), who had lately been a tutor at the Academy, and had left it to accompany Captain Cook upon his second voyage round the world; there was a series of "Essays on Song-Writing"

1 In Warrington 1766 to 1772.

(1772), by young Dr. Aikin, the accomplished son of a gifted father, who, in his turn, bequeathed some portion of his own exceptional endowments to [1]each member of his family of four; there were the earliest of his sister's poems, many of them of local interest (1773); there was the first edition of a book of world-wide reputation, Dr. Enfield's "Speaker" (1774); there was a learned treatise called "The Doctrine of the Sphere," by the [2]Rev. George Walker—another Academy tutor (1775); there was a book on "British Zoology," in four volumes (1776), by Thomas Pennant; there was a clever poem, called "Mount Pleasant" (1777), by young William Roscoe, who gave promise even now of those high gifts which ultimately won for him a European reputation; there was Howard's first, and possibly his most important, work; and, finally, when Eyres had

1. Arthur Aikin, F.L.S., F.G.S., &c., author of a 'Manual of Mineralogy,' &c., Secretary to the Society of Arts, and Lecturer on Chemistry at Guy's Hospital; Lucy Aikin, author of 'Memoirs' of the Courts of Queen Elizabeth, James 1st, Charles 1st, &c.; Charles Rochemont Aikin, M.R.C.S.L., joint author with Charles of a 'Dictionary of Chemistry and Mineralogy;' Edmund Aikin, author of an 'Essay on Modern Architecture,' &c.

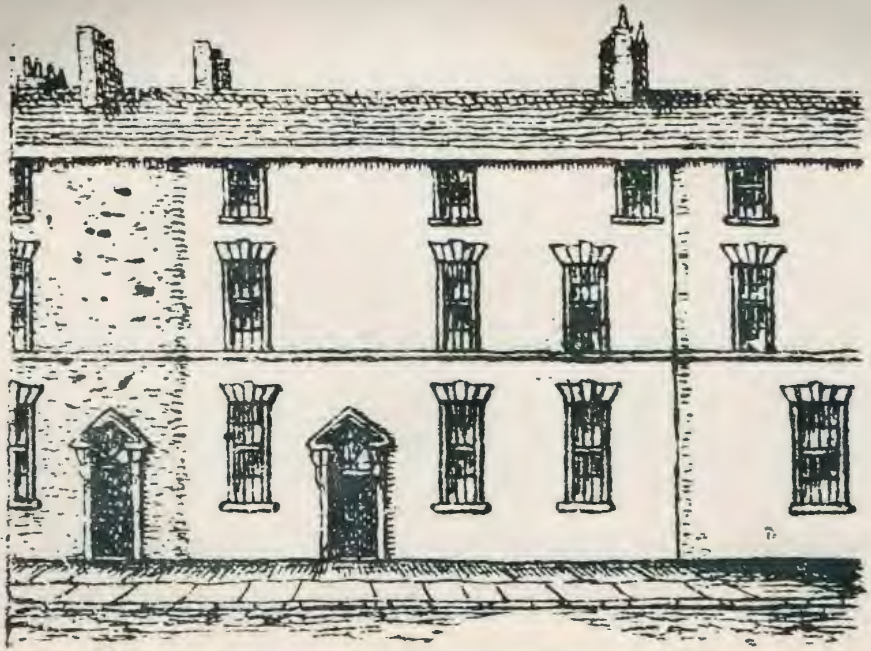
2 In Warrington 1772 to 1775.

shown me quite a dozen other publications, all elegantly printed, many of them already famous, and each the product of his quaint old printing-press, he proudly handed me a sumptuous work in two volumes, rich in beautiful engravings, and described upon the title-page as a "History of the Ancient Earls of Warren and Surrey," stating, as he did so, that six copies only of the first edition had been printed (1776), and that Gilbert Wakefield—the new tutor—had been good enough to compliment him by describing it as "perhaps the most accurate specimen of typography ever produced by any press."

Even as he spoke I saw, as in a glass, a long succession of great men and women who, for half a century, resorted gladly to this quaint old house in order that their deathless thoughts might be embodied in meet dress, and thence go forth transfigured to enlighten and uplift the world. In addition to the gracious figures whom these glistening tomes recalled, I seemed to hazily perceive a crowd of other writers scarcely less distinguished, and, amongst them, the aforesaid Wakefield, Dr. Percival, and Dr. Barnes. I also readily identified the learned Edward Owen,

rector of the parish and headmaster of our ancient Grammar School [1] (itself the nurse of many gifted men), whose translations of the works of Juvenal and Persius were destined to maintain their own as masterpieces of enlightened scholarship, and were fitting comrades to those "Warrington Classics" which young Dr. Aikin had originated with so much enthusiasm. And, in anticipation, I beheld John Fitchett pluming quietly the 'prentice wings which were to carry him, before he died, upon the longest flight in all the realms of English poesy, by publishing a poem on the deed whose memory still brooded grimly over the manorial halls of "Bewsey" (1796). Moreover, as we said good-day, and rambled on towards Bewsey Street to view the residence of Wakefield, it appeared to suddenly grow dark again, and I was certain that I saw the genial printer creeping stealthily to that old gabled building in the night-time, and setting there, with an unwonted air of secresy, and quite unaided, while his fellow citizens were soundly sleeping

1 Amongst them may be named the Hon. George Tierney, Treasurer of the Navy under Mr. Addington's administration, and President of the Board of Control under Lord Grenville's.



THE RESIDENCE OF GILBERT WAKEFIELD.

and the silence was unbroken save when suddenly some drowsy watchman called the hour, a book of world-wide notoriety—"The Age of Reason," by the infidel Tom Paine.[1]

From Bewsey Street, we quietly retraced our steps to Buttermarket, strolling past the Old Fox Inn, and by the former residence of Dr. Taylor, opposite the end of Bank Street. Here, the student told me, with a merry twinkle in his eyes, a young academician had for several nights appeared amid the darkness in an ox's skin and horns, and terrified this eminently quiet and respectable locality so much that half its fine old homes were tenantless.

The line of ancient shops and houses on the right gave place, at last, to a palisaded courtyard, standing in the midst of spacious gardens. These, of course, at once arrested my attention; but my comrade asked me, first, to go with him a little further, till we reached a pleasant house in

1 Another book deserves to be mentioned, though it did not issue from this famous press—"The History of the Siege of Gibraltar," by Colonel John Drinkwater, who was a native of Latchford.

Dial Street, with gardens at both front and rear, and, opposite, upon the present site of the Police Station, a house festooned delightfully with a prolific vine. The house at which we paused was number 6, and here the elder Dr. Aikin had resided. We gazed at it in pensive retrospect, and thought about a certain quiet tomb in the church-yard, and so passed on into the garden, which ran, I found, right back to Cockhedge Lane. Was it fancy, or a dream within a dream? Once again I saw, or I thought I saw, the charming girl whom I had noticed in the Alcove. She stood beneath a pear tree in full bloom, immediately against the garden wall. The sun shone on her fair young face and girlish figure, touching both to greater loveliness, whilst a blush which seemed half angry mantled her soft cheeks with deeper rose. And she was not alone. A wealthy rustic, who was evidently very much in love, was using all the crude resources of his limited vocabulary to explain the depth of his devotion. She answered him, at first, with gentle raillery. Then, seeing that his fondness was not feigned, assumed a kinder tone and sought to argue with him. Still he urged his suit, until, at last, quite wearied by his importunity, she seized

THE POOR HOUSE.

an over-hanging branch of that white-blossomed pear tree, and, with the litheness of some woodland sylph, swung easily upon the wall, and, ere her lover could recover his lost wits, had swiftly disappeared below the scented boughs which sweetly shaded Cockhedge Lane.

We sauntered on to Church Street—which had modified its name without materially altering its appearance—specially to see the local Gaol, which stood behind the Poor House, and which Howard had described as follows in his famous book:

"WARRINGTON TOWN BRIDEWELL.

"Two rooms in the Work-house Yard; one about nine feet square, with bedstead and straw; no window: the other about nine feet by five, with an aperture for air eighteen inches by four. No employment. Allowance for diet, the same as the Poor, who, by their appearance, seem to have a humane attention paid to them. Keeper, no Salary for the Bridewell: no Fees: is Master of the Work-house.

"1777, March 20, No Prisoners."

We went inside, and verified the great philanthropist's account by our own observations, both of us agreeing that the town might well congratulate itself upon so mild a judgment.

And Warrington, indeed, was palpably improving, for I learnt that Wesley was a frequent visitor, and, in his "Journal," had recorded his impressions faithfully from time to time; that, in the year in which the Academy was founded, he had preached "about noon" (upon the 2nd of May) "to a wild, staring people, (very few excepted,) who seemed just ripe for mischief," though, as he did not fail to add, "the bridle was in their jaws"; that, in 1760, he had preached (again at noon) in the old town, and, though "many of 'the beasts of the people' were present," "the bridle from above was in their teeth, so that they made not the least disturbance"; that, after a brief intermediate visit, he had been, in 1764, "but what a change! No opposer, nor any trifler now! Every one heard as for life"; and that, in 1766, he had addressed, as usual, "about noon," "a large congregation, rich and poor, learned and unlearned," and had "never spoke more plain, nor . . . . . seen a congregation listen with more attention." In 1772, the entry ran: "At one I preached in Warrington. I believe all the young gentlemen of the academy were there; to whom I stated and proved the use of reason, from those words of St. Paul, 'In

THE RESIDENCE OF JOHN AIKIN, M.D.

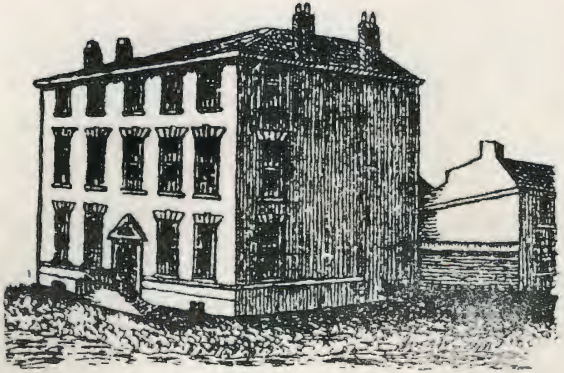
"'wickedness be ye children, but in understanding be ye men.'" This visit was still often talked about, I found; and my companion had actually heard the great evangelist, upon the occasion of a yet more recent visit (1780), when he had concluded that "at last there is reason to hope, that God will have a steady people even in this wilderness."

But, to me—emancipated from the smoke and turmoil of an avaricious age—"this wilderness" was like a garden, notwithstanding Wesley's words; and, as we quietly retraced our steps, in earnest talk, and reached a red brick house which stood at the extremity of Orford Street, I noticed that, in front of it, a maze of *actual* gardens stretched right on to Mersey Street. In this substantial residence the younger Dr. Aikin had, I found, for years resided, in an atmosphere in every way congenial to his cultured tastes. Here his four illustrious children saw the light; here Howard spent his evenings, thinking always of his mighty work; here Roscoe was a frequent guest, with Pennant, the great naturalist, and Currie, the biographer of Burns, and quite a galaxy of learned men, who shone like stars amid

the intellectual firmament which seemed to brighten all the place.

The doctor, who was fond of botany, could boast a lovely garden of his own across the street—a savage dog kept ceaseless watch and ward within the yard that led to it—and Roscoe, from his visits to the sunny spot, had caught the sweet contagion, and become (amongst his numerous accomplishments) a clever botanist himself. The fragrant science was, indeed, much wooed in Warrington, and old John Blackburne's grounds at Orford Hall were rich in rarities of leaf, and bloom, and fruit. He was the second gentleman in England to produce the pine apple, and, my companion said, the very first to cultivate the cotton plant successfully, his daughter having had a dress made from the snowy filaments in which —had not some family bereavement intervened —it was her purpose to appear at Court. The daughter had, it seemed, inherited the father's tastes, and she, like him, could claim to be "the friend of Linnæus," who had honoured her by naming one of the American warblers *Sylvia Blackburniæ*, a compliment which Reinhold Forster copied, terming a strange genus of New

THE ACADEMY IN 1762.



THE RESIDENCE OF DR. PRIESTLEY.

Holland plants *Blackburnia.* But the learned lady had her little eccentricities, and Sheridan, the dramatist, whom she was also privileged to "enter on" her "list of friends," was said to have based his character of Mrs. Malaprop upon her curious mispronunciations.

Engaged in pleasant chat, we passed the gardens, turning to the left, and sauntering through an ornamental iron gateway, which led between two other large and comfortable red brick houses to the court-yard which has been already mentioned. It was flanked upon the right by a range of similar erections, and, opposite the open gate, shut in by a big building not unlike the Blue Coat School.

In the house upon the left I found that Dr. Priestley had resided. I followed my companion to a small two-storied edifice which stood a little to the rear of it.

"This was Dr. Priestley's study and laboratory," he explained, "and here those great discoveries with which the world will ring, and which are calculated to completely revolutionize our old ideas of chemistry, began."

It was the place commemorated by Miss Aikin in her amusing [1]"Inventory," and, as we went inside, there came a vision of the fair young girl —a little older now—approaching merrily, and looking round with those quick eyes of hers, and finding in a trap a trembling little mouse, confined all night by the great scientist, no doubt in order that he might experiment with the different kinds of air. I watched her breathlessly as swiftly she procured a pen, pounced on a piece of paper, and, her bright eyes shining with the light of pity and of human kindness, put "the Mouse's" mute "Petition" into words.

The damsel rose and disappeared, leaving the verses open on the doctor's desk. And soon I saw a grave and studious figure enter, with a face refined and gentle as a woman's, but luminous with thought and sage with years of study. He walked towards his desk and saw the paper. As he read the touching words, the smile began to deepen into an expression full of feeling, and I fancied that there were tears in his eyes. Then, very quietly, he turned towards the trap in which the timid prisoner was confined, and, in another

1 "An Inventory of the Furniture in Dr. Priestley's Study."

moment, all its tiny heart aglow with gratitude, it had scampered off to join its fellows.

"What a genius that girl is," said the doctor, stammering, as was his wont. "I'm very proud to think that it is to me, as she was good enough to say the other day, she owes her wish to cultivate the Muse. She will win undying laurels yet, unless I much misjudge! And, better still, her heart is just as noble as her head!"

The doctor rose to undertake some new experiment, and, as I watched him, I was fain to murmur, quoting Coleridge half unconsciously:

> "Lo! Priestley there, patriot, and saint, and sage,
> . . . Him from his native land
> Statesmen, blood-stained, and priests idolatrous,
> By dark lies maddening the blind multitude,
> Drove with vain hate; calm, pitying, he retired;"

and added, in the language of the charming damsel's future tribute to her friend:

> [1] "Well canst thou afford
> To give large credit for that debt of fame
> Thy country owes thee."

As we passed into the house, I glanced into a

1 "To Dr. Priestley, December 29, 1792."

small side room. Was this another vision, or had Time again reversed his course? For tea was laid, and at the tray there sat a homely lady who was evidently Mrs. Priestley, with five learned forms surrounding her, each one of whom I recognized at once. The first was her distinguished husband. The next, the [1] Rev. John Seddon, that indefatigable Presbyterian divine who was the founder and the Rector of the Academy—a man who was [2]"never discouraged, though his discouragements" were "innumerable; . . . never down-hearted, though his friends" were "always suggesting difficulties, and prophesying evil"—a man of [3]"cheerful piety, universal benevolence, extensive knowledge, and temperate zeal for civil and religious liberty." But, in spite of all his virtues, Mr. Seddon was, apparently, a trifle dull, and seemed to think of little else but the Academy. The third was poor John Holt, that "reasoning automaton" to whom allusion has been made, unquestionably duller still; the fourth was Dr. Aikin; whilst the fifth

1 In Warrington 1757 to 1770.

2 "Historical Sketch of Warrington Academy."

3 Dr. Percival.

was the head-master of the Grammar School—a gifted scholar who, in spite of fundamental differences of doctrine, had been drawn by kindred tastes into this learned and congenial circle.

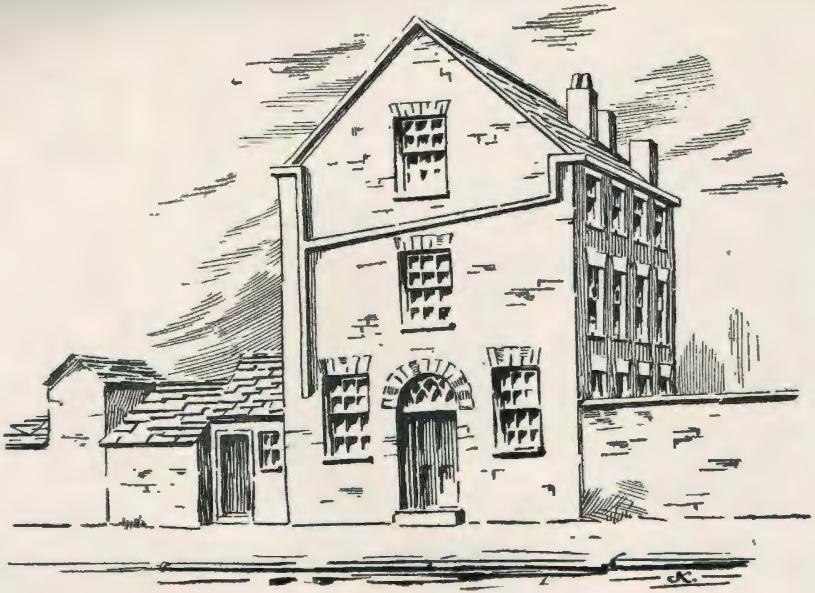
They talked on many subject with a heartiness and freedom under which the icy Holt himself began to thaw, and, presently, descending from the realm of mathematical abstractions beneath the genial influence of "the cups that cheer, but not inebriate," discussed a knotty point of doctrine, each of them depositing, before he left, some verses, written by himself, in Mrs. Priestley's workbag.

I listened eagerly to all that passed, but suddenly my comrade, who did not seem to have noticed anything, remarked that it was time to go, for Peter Cropper, the scout, had rung the bell, and tea was ready. As we passed into the quadrangle, I heard a chorus of young voices calling "Peter! Peter! bring me more tea, but no more water!" with many similar expressions. The windows of the range of buildings on the right were open, and at each a student sat, engaged in chaffing the old scout unmercifully or in making merry comments to his chums.

"Poor Peter!" said my friend. "Some time ago, the students had a tame owl, and one night, for a joke, they stuck it, with some phosphorous, upon the stairs. It nearly frightened him out of his senses.[1] The gates are regularly locked, but a number of the students, and especially some young West Indians, continually defy the rules, and manage to get into all sorts of mischief. Not long ago, we changed the signs of all the leading local inns, to the immense astonishment of a bewildered public. We have some very jolly times, I assure you!"

He added that the students had lodged, at first, with the tutors, and were often invited to their houses, and that practically they were one large family; and went on to tell me of the beautiful Miss Rigbys, daughters of the purveyor, who resided just behind the Students' Quarters. They, it seemed, together with Miss Aikin, had played havoc with the

1 Dr. Aikin afterwards based upon this incident a story in the "Farm-Yard Journal," written for "Evenings at Home." The hero, Joseph, is none other than old Peter, and his terror of the ghost is simply Peter's terror of the owl and phosphorous.



THE RESIDENCE OF MR. RIGBY.

academic heart, and, upon the publication of Rousseau's "Héloise," [1] "every body fell in love with every body." Miss Aikin had, however, finally married a queer little Frenchman called Rochemont Barbauld (1774), and the couple kept a famous school at Palgrave; each of the Miss Rigbys had accepted Hymen's fetters in their turn; and one of them was now the wife of genial young Dr. Parry, who, like Rochemont Barbauld, had been educated at the Academy, and fallen irretrievably beneath the spell of two bright eyes.

He told me many interesting anecdotes concerning these attractive maids, and I was much amused to hear how they had one night asked a number of the students to supper; how hams, and potted meats, and trifles, and various other appetizing edibles adorned the table; how the unwitting youths were innocently asked to help the ladies; and how they had then discovered that the hams were made of wood; that the potted meats were simply potted sawdust; and that the luscious-looking trifle was ingeniously com-

1 Miss Lucy Aikin to Mr. Henry A. Bright.

pounded of soap-suds! On another occasion, they had set their minds upon some amateur theatricals, and thereby scandalized the grave and reverend body who presided over their affairs, and who, in what they thought the interests of the due decorum of the place, had interposed their veto, at which Miss Aikin—chafing under this distasteful exercise of discipline—had pilloried the circle in her mocking lines "To Wisdom." And, *apropos* of theatricals, he mentioned incidentally that Mrs. Siddons, the great actress, was said to have made her first appearance on the stage in an old barn behind the Three Crowns in the Market Place.

I listened with the keenest interest, but, as he glibly rambled on, regaling me with endless anecdotes concerning all the merry doings still attributed to fair Miss Aikin and her friends, I seemed to see, as in a mirror, the bright prospects of our Warrington poetess irremediably darkened by the after-madness of her husband; and, amid the rigour of eternal frost and snow, beheld the son of that same Dr. Parry—the blood of the old town within his veins—go forth to seek the hidden pathway to the Pole!

While we gossiped in this free and easy fashion, I observed a fleeting figure whose expression haunted me. It flashed before me, for a moment only, and was gone! But that wild look, those long black locks, that sensuous, cruel mouth, those glittering dark eyes—where had I seen them before? Surely it was with the bloody knife plunged into the perfidious breast within that gloomy chamber in the capital where Art has sought to represent in wax the murder of the infamous [1] Marat! The evil face passed by so suddenly that I was not quite certain that my eyes had not deceived me, or my fancy played me yet another trick. But other shadowy figures seemed to pass me now, in swift succession, and

1 Marat is stated to have been one of Reinhold Forster's successors as Professor of Modern Languages; to have left Warrington after a short stay and gone to Oxford, where he robbed the Ashmolean Museum, the founder of which (Elias Ashmole), lived some time in Warrington, and was initiated as a mason here in 1646. The culprit is said to have escaped to Ireland, been captured and brought back to Oxford, convicted under the name of Le Maitre, and sent to the hulks, where he was seen by one of his former pupils. He afterwards became a bookseller in Bristol, and was again imprisoned. A member of the Bristol Society for the Relief of Prisoners, who had assisted him, identified him in the National Assembly, Paris, in 1792. The story has, however, been disputed, and appears to be of doubtful authenticity.

continually changing as I gazed ; to walk into those spacious rooms whose steps we now ascended ; to stroll with studious feet across the sheltered quadrangle, or knock, with youthful vigour, on those quivering side doors. Amongst them I perceived with special interest one of the two men of whom not only Warrington, but Lancashire, would yet be proud. It was Thomas Barnes, the friend of Percival ! I also seemed to recognize John Prior Estlin, afterwards the well-known minister and theologian ; [1] Philip Meadows Martineau, the future Norwich surgeon, who lent added lustre to a singularly honourable name ; and James Capper, probably anticipating even now those strange adventures in the East which he was presently to write about. Nor did I fail to note Beaufoy, imbibing here those principles which made him champion so ardently the abolition of the Test Acts ; George Forster, shortly destined to accompany his father on that memorable voyage round the world with Captain Cook, and, with him, tell the tale of it, a trifle indiscreetly, perhaps ; or Samuel Heywood, afterwards the friend of Fox, and the renowned

1 Uncle of the great philosopher so recently deceased.

Welsh judge; or Archibald Hamilton Rowan, the incipient Irish rebel and friend of Napper Tandy; or Francis Pierson, little dreaming of the glorious death he was to die whilst gallantly defending Jersey from the French; or young Addison, of Preston, doomed, alas, to early death at Bunker's Hill! I likewise thought I saw James Pilkington, the chronicler of Derbyshire; Strickland Freeman, the accomplished agriculturist; [1] Pendlebury Houghton (afterwards a tutor here); and Richard Anthony Markham, the authority on botany; as well as William Bruce, the embryo Doctor of Divinity; and Samuel Shore, the future president of the Academy at York; John Goodricke, the astronomer who traced the periodical variations in the apparent magnitude of several stars; and Harford, friend of Burke; and Samuel Gaskell, bearer of a name we still delight to honour; John Wedgwood, of Etruria, too, the son of old Josiah, one of the Academy trustees; with Shepherd, afterwards the friend of Roscoe, and his fellow-worker in the sweet fields of Italian literature; and—possibly the greatest of them all—

1 In Warrington 1773 to 1778.

the gentle Malthus, destined to become "one of the best men and truest philosophers of any age or country;" not to mention quite a host of budding baronets, and peers, and other members of the Imperial Parliament, Lord Willoughby, of Parham, the last of the Presbyterian nobility of England, among the number.

As in some shifting panorama all these memorable figures came and went, with many more, some busy with their books, imbibing here those sacred principles of truth and liberty, and laying deep and broad those strong foundations of enduring knowledge which would lift them into eminence, and cast eternal lustre on the annals of the town; some burning to achieve distinction in the senate, or to devote their energies to the amelioration of the sad lot of the suffering and the poor; some eager to explore the mysteries of unknown lands, and others wrapped in holy contemplation of the things "beyond the veil." And, as I gazed on them, I thought of our fair poetess once more, and proudly said:—

[1] "Ye generous youth who love this studious shade,
How rich a field is to your hopes display'd!

1 "The Invitation."

"Knowledge to you unlocks the classic page;
And virtue blossoms for a better age.
Oh golden days! Oh bright unvalued hours!
What bliss (did ye but know that bliss) were yours?
With richest stores your glowing bosoms fraught,
Perception quick, and luxury of thought;
The high designs that heave the labouring soul,
Panting for fame, impatient of controul;
And fond enthusiastic thought, that feeds
On pictur'd tales of vast heroic deeds;
And quick affections, kindling into flame
At virtue's, or their country's honour'd name;
And spirits light to every joy in tune;
And friendship ardent as a summer's noon;
And generous scorn of vice's venal tribe;
And proud disdain of interest's sordid bribe;
And conscious honour's quick instinctive sense;
And smiles unforc'd; and easy confidence;
And vivid fancy; and clear simple truth;
And all the mental bloom of vernal youth.

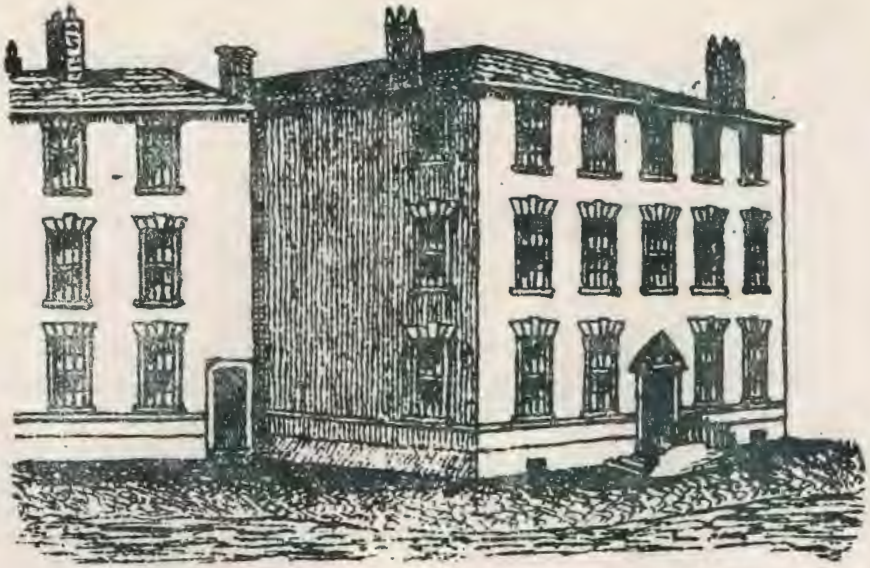
"How bright the scene to fancy's eye appears,
Thro' the long perspective of distant years,
When this, this little group their country calls
From academic shades and learned halls,
To fix her laws, her spirit to sustain,
And light up glory thro' her wide domain!
Their various tastes in different arts display'd,
Like temper'd harmony of light and shade,
With friendly union in one mass shall blend,
And this adorn the state, and that defend.
These the sequester'd shade shall cheaply please,
With learned labour and inglorious ease:
While those, impell'd by some resistless force,
O'er seas and rocks shall urge their vent'rous course;

"Rich fruits matur'd by glowing suns behold,
And China's groves of vegetable gold;
From every land the various harvest spoil,
And bear the tribute to their native soil:
But tell each land (while every toil they share,
Firm to sustain, and resolute to dare,)
MAN is the nobler growth our realms supply,
And SOULS are ripen'd in our northern sky."

But not a few of the young students left the classic precincts of the Academy with downcast eyes, anticipating poor Tom Moore, perhaps, in his lament:

"The time I've lost lost in wooing,
In watching and pursuing
The light that lies
In woman's eyes,
Has been my heart's undoing.
Though Wisdom oft has sought me,
I scorned the lore she brought me,
My only books
Were woman's looks,
And folly's all they've taught me."

1783. And, alas, the wild freaks of these butterflies of the Academy were causing their distracted tutors much concern! It was evening. I could see a group of students surreptitiously escaping from the gardens to the rear, and making towards the centre of the town. They successfully eluded the vigilance of old



THE RESIDENCE OF DR. ENFIELD.

Peter, and, stealthily proceeding to a neighbouring inn, accosted the coachman and the footman of a well-known local lady who was at a brilliant local ball. Enticing them inside, they plied them well with liquor, yoked the horses, seized the reins, and, having donned some curious habiliments in an adjacent outhouse, boldly drove to the scene of the ball. It was, as they anticipated, drawing to a close. The lady emerges. Her carriage is called for, and presently appears. But the footmen are two grinning imps with flaming torches; a demon coachman leers upon her from the box; and from the carriage there springs out to meet her a grim figure which has horns, and tail, and cloven feet! Meanwhile, in the large and comfortable house upon the right, in [1] Dr. Enfield's cosy study, its shelves well lined with books, a goodly number of his own among the rest, I can see the *Rector Academiæ* himself—a man of gentle countenance, who [2]"loved mankind, and wished nothing so much as to render them the worthy objects of love." He

1 Dr. Enfield resided in Warrington from 1770 to 1785. The house had previously been occupied by John Holt and John Reinhold Forster.

2 Dr. Aikin.

wears a look of grave concern, and is talking very seriously to those who sit with him, and puff their long clay pipes—of local manufacture—without the usual composure. The one who sits beside him is rather plain, with a lofty forehead and a large and resolute nose. It is Gilbert Wakefield—the man who learnt Hebrew in a three weeks' holiday, acquired some seven new languages during his four years' sojourn in the town, and established here the basis of a lasting literary fame—a theologian of unique attainments, a classic scholar of immense repute, a pamphleteer prepared to go to gaol for the sake of his principles, [1] "his talents were rare, his morals pure, his views exalted, his courage invincible, his integrity without a spot." The third was [2] Dr. Nicholas Clayton, who had succeeded Dr. Aikin as professor of divinity. He was a modest, unpretentious man, of refined appearance and substantial parts, and, as minister at the Octagon Chapel, Liverpool, had been the first to introduce a liturgy—without success—among a congregation of Protestant Dissenters. The

1 See Dr. Aikin's Memoir.

2 In Warrington 1780 to 1783.

three are talking very gravely of the danger which impends above the much-loved place.

"The continued downfall in the number of our students and the shrinkages in our subscription list are very serious," said Dr. Clayton, "and it is clear that something must be done at once."

[1] "'After the experience of many years,'" said Dr. Enfield, "'I find myself confirmed in the opinion that' the project 'is impracticable in such a place as ours, where youths from fourteen to eighteen years of age are placed in college apartments, without any superior resident amongst them, and free from all domestic restraints. Irregularities have from time to time unavoidably arisen, which have at last, I am afraid, led the public to form a decided judgment against the Academy.' Our students come from places where we are but little known. Our trustees themselves, with one exception, now fight shy of us. Unless some domestic plan of education be adopted, I fear that we shall go from bad to worse. It is useless to continue to exert our-

1 See letters from Dr. Enfield and Gilbert Wakefield in "Historical Sketch of Warrington Academy."

" selves upon the present lines. The older students—filled with an enlightened love of knowledge, loyal to their *alma mater*, and many of them casting, even now, undying fame on it—have given place to students of a different type. 'An idle waste of time'—I say it with intense regret—' a coarse and vulgar familiarity, a disposition towards riot and mischief, intemperance, and in some instances gaming, profaneness and licentious manners, have found their way into a seminary intended to train up youth in habits of sobriety and virtue.' "

" I quite agree with you," said Mr. Wakefield. " Our pupils, 'when they come' amongst us, 'are too young, and too ill-educated;' 'they are thrown together in a large sequestered house,—there is no sufficient power of enforcing discipline,—the Academy is neither school nor college; it is without the supervision exercised in the one, and it wants the influence and authority of the other,—the students are treated as men, while they are but a set of wild and reckless boys.' "

Long they talked in this disheartened strain, and the night was far advanced when they re-

tired. And, as I left the court, old Peter opening the gate for me, I heard a rustle among the trees in the far corner, and, the next moment, saw four youths, in uncouth robes, drop silently into the garden, and quietly creep past him to their lodgings.

* * * * * * *

And now the century was drawing to- **1798.**
wards its close, and the glory had well-nigh departed. But, ere it wholly faded, I beheld another sight which greatly moved me. In the gray light of a chilly morning I was standing once again in Sankey Street. The bell in Trinity tower was striking six, and on every side I saw strange groups of military-looking fellows making hastily towards the Assembly Room in Golden Square. They were all attired in curious swallow-tailed blue coats, white pantaloons and waistcoats, the former fitting tightly to the figure, with half-gaiters of black cloth, and wore round hats, with bearskin covers and black cockades, surmounted by a white military feather, tipped with red," whilst, on the oval breast-plates which adorned their belts of white leather, I read, in Roman capitals, the letters "L.W.V."

Instinctively I said, "The Bluebacks!" and I knew that every man of them had borne the cost of his accoutrements himself, and that, three times a week, at this unconscionably early hour, they sallied forth to morning drill. For the cry of danger had arisen. The white walls of the "precious stone set in the silver sea" were threatened by invading forces, and, across the Channel, in that other gem—an emerald amid the blue—rebellion rose and soon grew threatening. All over England men were mustering at the Mother's call, and all the proud traditions of the middle ages and the Civil War still stirred within the staunch breasts of the dwellers in "the good old town." I followed these strange figures to the Assembly Room with natural interest and curiosity, and heard the colonel say that he had just received an intimation from the lord-lieutenant of the county that, at any hour, the news might come of an invasion. Eagerly I watched him draw a chalk mark on the floor, and then invite the men who were prepared to extend their voluntary service for five miles beyond the town—a service full of extra risks—to step across the line. A momentary pause ensued. Suddenly a private called James Ashton, waving high his

A "BLUEBACK."

bearskin hat, stepped proudly forth, exclaiming in a ringing voice: "Come along lads; death or glory!" And immediately each man in the regiment followed his example, and I knew that Warrington was safe.

CHAPTER VI.

"THE TOWN OF MANY INDUSTRIES."

But even while I gazed the skies grew gradually darker. There was silence in the courts where learned men had walked and eager students congregated. In place of apple trees, I saw tall chimneys springing up on every hand; and, as I wandered to and fro, I noticed that the beautiful old habitations which had charmed me so were disappearing one by one. As in some huge kaleidoscope the scene is ever changing, so about me houses rose and fell, and streets were built or vanished as I walked, with wistful footsteps, looking for the traces of time-honoured names and precious memories. Visibly the great town grew, but with its growth its picturesqueness died away. Instead of watching fifty coaches passing through it with their daily freight of human souls, I saw grim locomotives snorting swiftly by; and in many a pleasant field and daisy-spangled

meadow I discerned the signs of deafening industry. The tranquil stream, with salmon leaping in the sunlight up the foam-clad reaches of the Weir, grew gradually darker, and almost every trace of the old loveliness was gone. I looked in vain for that half-timbered edifice from whence high thoughts, embalmed in precious books, had flown for fifty years in a continual stream. The house where once Macgowan baked good bread, and wrote rare allegories in between the bakings, was nowhere visible. I asked for Litherland's forgotten cottage, but upon it stood a huge hotel. I sought the residence of the younger Dr. Aikin. It had been made into a butcher's shop, and in the scented garden where the lithe-limbed poetess eluded her rich rustic lover I beheld a nest of reeking slums. Then, passing on towards the Academy, I said :

> 1 "Lo there the seats where Science loved to dwell,
> Where Liberty her ardent spirit breathed ;
> While each glad Naiad from her secret cell
> Her native sedge with classic honours wreathed."

But, when I reached the well-remembered spot, I saw that Priestley's house was turned into an

1 "Epistle to Dr. Enfield, on his revisiting Warrington in 1789." By Mrs. Barbauld.

office, whilst the scene of all his wonderful experiments had been superseded by an ugly warehouse. Dr. Enfield's home was altered almost out of recognition. Those stately iron gates and palisades had disappeared. The rooms where happy-hearted students mingled earnest thought with their abounding mischief was a common lodging-house, awaiting ignominious demolition; whilst the hall beyond the dreamy quadrangle was but an empty memory, and had given place to a grim thoroughfare which led towards a thoroughfare more dismal still.

"O seats beloved in vain!"

I cried,

"Your rising dome
With what fond joy my youthful eyes surveyed;
Pleased by your sacred springs to find my home,
And tune my lyre beneath your growing shade!

"Does Desolation spread his gloomy veil
Your grass-grown courts and silent halls along?
Or busy hands there pile the cumbrous sail,
And Trade's harsh din succeed the Muse's song?"

And, as the well-known lines were ringing musically in my brain, I entered Mersey Street. It was hideous beyond description— one welter-ing chaos of mere bricks and mortar; and I hastened on towards the spot where, as I fondly

"A Huge and Staring Shop."

hoped, there still might be some lingering traces of the happier time. I reached the river, and the very Bridge had changed its character. From its narrow parapets I peered into the once translucent stream. It was black as ink. Each bank was lined with works and warehouses, and scarce a sign was there of field or meadow. With sinking heart, I turned to where that old house stood reflected proudly in the crystal waters. At first I could not see it, but, immediately in front of me, perceived a huge and staring shop, in which a man was volubly conducting a large auction sale. I could hardly believe my eyes. But they had not deceived me, and it was only when I looked again that I discovered the old building, hiding with a shame-faced countenance behind its neighbour, as though in order to conceal its general air of long neglect and great dilapidation; its windows thick with dust and cobwebs; its rooms unoccupied; its terrace and its gardens gone; and, where of old, Miss Aikin wrote those haunting verses in that ivy-covered Alcove, a great yard beset with dingy sheds and outbuildings devoted to all sorts of unromantic trades. Everywhere I saw the same depressing scenes. The quaint old sturdy red brick man-

sions, once the residence of those who made their money in the town, were shops, or offices, or lodging-houses. Every day, I found, the wealthier classes came into it in the morning, wrapped it in a shroud of smoke, and added new abominations to its reeking river; and every night went off by early trains to their suburban pleasaunces without so much as giving it a thought. I asked a passer-by if they were liberal with the wealth which they had gained in it, and he assured me that, with one or two exceptions, they were just the very reverse.

"But, of course," I said, "they do their best in other ways to promote the interests of the place, and serve it with their brains if not with their purses?"

"There are not half a dozen of them in the Council," he replied, "and the great majority entirely shirk their public duties!"

And, as he spoke, the town still roared and surged around me; a sickening odour from the river filled the air; and the blue skies from which I had so lately wandered were concealed by sulphurous clouds which well-nigh blotted out

the sun. "The Athens of England" was a fading memory, and, in its place, I found the "Coalchester" of Mr. Richard Le Gallienne's latest tale—"a very old, very ignorant, very sooty, hard-hearted, stony-streeted, meanly-grim, little provincial town."

"Does no one care for Warrington then?" I asked indignantly. "Are all its old traditions quite forgotten? Is it absolutely blind, and deaf, and dead to everything except mere money-making?"

"It is not quite so bad as that," my friend replied, in tones of some rebuke. "And, even on its money-making side, the place is not to be despised. It is said to have manufactured pottery in Roman times. When Henry sold its Priory and tried seven wives in turn, it had 'a better Market than Manchester.' And it is not many generations since men regularly spoke of 'Liverpool, near Warrington.' But, whilst Liverpool and Manchester have overtaken it, the old town has not by any means been standing still. Its industries, indeed, have grown 'by leaps and bounds.' We hear of its trade in flax, and hemp, and linen in the time of the Tudors, and its trade

"in pins has lasted since the Civil War. In 1720, it was famous for its malt, a traveller stating that the ale which was brewed from it was[1] 'not inferior to the most noted ales in England.' In 1787, a Latchford cotton mill could claim to be the first in Lancashire to introduce the steam engine ; and, at the close of the last century, we could boast another pottery of no mean fame, as well as an extensive trade in glass. Moreover, Warrington was said, about this time, to furnish more than half the sails that were used in the Royal Navy ; and it was probably with canvas made in our old weaving-sheds that Nelson went to his immortal victories, and won for his beloved land 'the sceptre of the seas.' About the middle of the present century, it promised to improve upon its ancient craft of making sails by making ships, but a disaster to the 'Tayleur'—launched with many hopes in 1853—unfortunately gave the enterprize a fatal check. And on the heels of all these industries came many more, for Warrington, as you have no doubt noticed, is most admirably placed. Midway be-

1 "The Origin and History of the Warrington Blue Coat School."

"tween the richest coal and salt mines in the country—the half-way house to two of the greatest cities in the Empire—it stands upon a navigable river on the threshold of the busiest shire in all the world. Moreover, it has other vast advantages. In 1712, a Mr. Thomas Steers, who built the earliest dock in Liverpool, surveyed the Irwell and the Mersey, and, some eight years later, Parliament assented to an Act to make them navigable up to Manchester by means of locks and weirs. In 1755, the Sankey Canal was made—the first in England, I am told—and, in 1758 and 9, the Duke of Bridgewater conceived and Brindley executed the canal which runs close by from Manchester to Runcorn, and has not one single lock between the two. Our local poetess has well described the making of this earlier waterway in words which would not be inapplicable to its huge successor :

> [1] "'Here smooth canals, across th' extended plain,
> Stretch their long arms, to join the distant main :
> The sons of toil with many a weary stroke
> Scoop the hard bosom of the solid rock ;

[1] "The Invitation."

"'Resistless thro' the stiff opposing clay
With steady patience work their gradual way;
Compel the genius of th' unwilling flood
Thro' the brown horrors of the aged wood;
Cross the lone waste the silver urn they pour,
And chear the barren heath or sullen moor:
The traveller with pleasing wonder sees
The white sail gleaming thro' the dusky trees;
And views the alter'd landscape with surprise,
And doubts the magic scenes which round him rise.
Now like a flock of swans, above his head
Their woven wings the flying vessels spread;
Now meeting streams in artful mazes glide,
While each unmingled pours a separate tide;
Now through the hidden veins of earth they flow,
And visit sulphurous mines and caves below;
The ductile streams obey the guiding hand,
And social plenty circles round the land.'

"The nineteenth century opened with the digging of a short canal to Runcorn. By virtue of an Act obtained in 1827, the second railway in the realm was built within six miles of Warrington, and, two years later, this was looped directly to the town by means of a branch line from Newton. Now, half a dozen leading lines are linked with us, and various new developments are in the air. In face of all these circumstances, perhaps it is not strange that, one by one, our industries have multiplied until to-day no town in England of an equal size can boast so long a list.

"Warrington is often termed, indeed, 'the town of many industries,' and who shall say the appellation is not well deserved? They total up to well-nigh forty, and are multiplying every year. Our forges flame by night and day; our iron, in a thousand shapes, is shipped to every clime; our files and tools have never been surpassed; and where, of old, the great White Cross drew sinners to their knees upon the way to *Sonkey*, and the deer browsed idly by the marshy precincts of *Mote* Hill, we regularly send to all the world innumerable miles of wire. Our tanneries spring up like mushrooms everywhere; we still make pins, by newer methods and in larger quantities; our trade in glass yet lingers on; our gas appliances are household words; our beer is possibly *too* famous; and as for our soap, well, it is just *Perfection!*" he added, with a smile.

He paused a moment thoughtfully, and then resumed: "I need not dwell upon our crystal borax or our wonderful white lead; and, notwithstanding neighbouring monopolies, we have not wholly lost our trade in chemicals. We help to find a hungry realm with flour; have fitted many a lordly home with perfect furniture; and

"thousands sleep most soundly on our comfortable mattresses and beds. Our macintoshes make us quite indifferent to the weather; and we supply the poor with fustian and the rich with tapestries whose deft designs recall Matilda and her Norman maids. When other towns are starving through the slackness of their staple trade, we barely feel the pinch, for it has never happened that the whole of our great industries were slack at once. And the poet really was not indulging in an idle boast when he declared that the old town

" Calls o'er her stream the admiring South to see
The pomp and pride of Northern industry.
On either hand invites the ravished gaze,
Where Commerce all her treasured wealth displays—
There the thronged port, where, by broad Mersey's side,
Forests of masts in harboured safety ride—
Queen of the Western shores!—the favour'd seat
For all of enterprising, fair and great—
Then to the right, where art triumphant smiles,
The world's vast storehouse rears her mighty piles;
And thence to every grateful land supplies
Robes pure as snow or rich with Tyrian dyes.

* * * * * *

" Shall then ('mid these so seated) no like grace
Adorn with equal step *this* favoured place?
Shall she her native rank omit to claim—
Her talents, knowledge, riches, thoughts, the same?
Not idly do her sons that claim deny,
But ask their station in their country's eye."

His face flushed, and his eyes grew strangely bright as he concluded, and I must confess that his enthusiasm strangely moved me. For, although I knew these things as well as he, I had not adequately realized them until now. I seemed to be back in modern Warrington without belonging to it. A curious sense of detachment had taken hold of me; but, after the enormous changes I had witnessed, I was glad enough to grasp the good side of this last and greatest change of all. But a sudden spirit of mischief prompted me to say, with a sly twinkle, that I had somehow heard that the great Railway Works at Crewe were lost to Warrington through its own want of enterprize; and that Port Sunlight, with its giant industry, and, better still, its smiling vistas of sweet cottages, and spacious streets, and scented gardens, would probably have nestled in the valley of the Mersey, just below Bank Quay, had but the old town risen to its opportunities.

His face dropped suddenly at this, and he replied, with evident reluctance:

"Yes, you are right! In spite of its tremendous chances, Warrington *has* been extremely

"slow. It has grown prosperous almost in spite of itself. For instance, though the Ship Canal runs past our very doors, we have not got a single dock; our solitary lay-by is but seldom used; and not one ocean-going steamer deigns to call. The town is half asleep, but there are many signs, of late, of its awakening; and, great and flourishing as is our trade, we look to see it vastly greater in the years which are to come."

"But what about the higher life?" I said. "I quite admit that there is something to be proud of in commercial progress and industrial prosperity. But you cannot climb to Heaven by chimneys, and, though the hum of your machinery echoed round the world—as, indeed, it seems to do—you may still be a long way from the Kingdom. I have heard of a 'pavid Towne . . . of a prety Bynes'—I did not tell him I had seen it, or he might have doubted me—which was 'sweetly built and situated'; where the stream was pure, and the apprentices must not be served with salmon more than twice a week; of a quaint old place where scholars mingled in sweet intercourse, and learned men and great philanthrophists came proudly, glad to breathe its uncon-

"taminated air; of a poetess who sang of it:

"'The Muses here have fixt their sacred seats';

of a press which sent its living stream of lofty thoughts in gracious language forth to fertilize all lands; and of an intellectual atmosphere which crowned the old town's forehead like a halo. I do not read of many chimneys then! And, from what you say, I gather that the town which boasts so grand a history has sold its soul for a commercial mess of pottage, and, instead of worshipping the Muses, bows the knee to Mammon, and prostrates itself before the brazen idol called Material Success."

"It is not quite so bad as that," my friend replied reflectively. "We have still our printing presses and philanthrophists, our scholars and our schools. And we are not so absolutely blind, and deaf, and dead to everything except mere money-making as you seem to think."

And, leading me across the Bridge, he slowly pointed towards the ancient Church.

"'In the shadow of the spire,'" he said, "we still can boast such institutions as few other towns

" possess. The Training College teaches multitudes of those whose high prerogative it is to teach the rising race, and passes on the torch of learning lit in Warrington to every corner of our English land. The daughters of the clergy here receive the education which will make them ornaments in any sphere of life to which they may be ultimately called. Sir Thomas Boteler's Grammar School, moreover, still exists, and carries on its noble work, as does the ancient Blue Coat School."

" But what of the Academy ? " I asked.

" It died in Warrington to rise again in Manchester," was his reply. " From thence it passed to York, returned to Manchester, and afterwards removed to London. It is known to all the world to-day as Manchester College, Oxford. Nor is its local origin forgotten. Its shelves contain the books which gleamed, last century, on ours, and from its walls beam down reflectively the faces of our old professors. A lovely oak screen in the chapel indicates its history ; and a Warrington window, rich in emblematic figures and in portraits of our greatest men, reminds the admiring visitor how still the Mersey

"and the Thames are twin, and Warrington for ever linked with Oxford."

He ended suddenly, and then abruptly added :

"There are other things of which we are legitimately proud. Come with me!"

With this, he led me to a building full of books—the first rate-supported Municipal Free Library in England, he declared (1838)—and thence to several chambers rich in pictures and in rare antiquities. And here he showed me a fine bust of William Beamont, our first Mayor, and **1847.** told me how, through all these gloomy years, he had been silently engaged in harvesting the priceless records of the past; and how John Fitchett Marsh, the first Town Clerk, had been a worthy fellow-labourer in the good cause; and how old Dr. Kendrick, too, had spent the best part of his time in garnering these golden memories for future use.

"When Warrington awakes from her long torpor, thanks to them," he said, "her sons and daughters may discover, in her half-forgotten archives, stories rich in grand endeavour and in

"high achievement, and may seek to emulate the half-forgotten virtues of their sires."

And then he led me to another room in the same building, and told me how young Harry Woods had learnt in it the rudiments of that high art in which he had become so great a master; how his friend, Luke Fildes, acquiring here the knowledge which was needful, had obtained a foremost place among contemporary painters; and how another student had achieved such miracles in marble as had made his native place delight to think of him as *Warrington* Wood. George Sheffield, too, he said, had done some memorable work in the old town; and, as we left the building, he directed my attention to a handsome lady with a singularly clever face, and said, in a half whisper, "That is *Sarah Grand!* She published her first novels here. They are full of local allusions, and her latest have, by this, become familiar as household words. She is a leader in the revolt of woman, and many think her one of the ablest writers of the day. In art and literature we are not quite dead you see; in botany, old William Wilson has maintained our former reputation most suc-

"cessfully, and given his name in turn to fungi, ferns, and flowers; it was in Warrington that Robert Moffat was inspired to missionary enterprize which led the way to Livingstone's discoveries, and to that Empire which will one day stretch from Cairo to the Cape; and I may mention that, in politics, we sent, not very long ago, a Wilson-Patten to control the destinies of Ireland, and a Richard Cross to serve his sovereign faithfully in many a Cabinet, and stand, respected, at the very elbow of the Throne. And, though many of our wealthier classes do not do their duty, Warrington has still a host of faithful sons and daughters left. And these are working steadily, in face of much discouragement, to usher in a better time. In the mill, at the forge, behind the counter, at bench and desk, in pulpit and in press, in school and slum, in church and council chamber, there are not a few who love their town, and ask no higher honour than to serve her, each in his peculiar sphere. Look, public spirit is not dead in Warrington!"

1897. And suddenly the quaint old streets grew gay with flags, the narrow footways thick with thronging citizens, and to in-

spiring music I beheld a long procession marching towards some leafy gardens and a noble park, and afterwards embarking on the bosom of the mighty waterway; and, as they moved in front of me, I seemed to hear them talking proudly of the old town's past, and speaking with high hope of all the following fifty years might bring.

1900. And, even as I looked, another century darkened to its close. And, once again, the Empire was in deadly danger, and compelled to call upon its faithful sons for aid. A brave, but blunder-headed, race who thought to apply the axioms of the sixteenth century to the requirements of the twentieth had forced us into war, and proved that they were both strong-armed and lion-hearted, however wrong-headed they might chance to be. A struggle which we had entered into somewhat lightly suddenly assumed an almost unexampled gravity, and, whilst we grappled with a stubborn, stern, and most resourceful foe, a continent looked on with jealous eyes, and, like some beast of prey, prepared to spring. But nobly did Britannia answer to the call. From far Australia, and distant Canada, and swarthy India the Empire's children rallied to the

Mother's side, and army after army crossed the sea to join the faithful sons of brave Natal in rolling back the tide of fierce invasion. And still disasters came, and once again there rose the cry for Volunteers. A hundred years had barely flown since "Death or Glory" and the gallant "Bluebacks" had stepped out to guard the town against the ancient enemy; but now not only France, but half the world, turned envious eyes on us, for close upon a fourth of its broad surface owned our sway, and it was not a question, any more, of merely bulwarking the white-cliffed isle. Far out beneath the Southern Cross our noblest sons were dying in a futile fight for freedom, and they wanted aid. Once more our richest and our humblest stepped into the breach, and, on the burning veldt, the blue blood and the red blood mixed in an immortal stream. All over England, men responded with an instant eagerness, and from all ranks the answering army came; and I was thrilled unspeakably to see that Warrington was in the forefront of the enterprize; that, under all that sulphurous cloud of smoke, and amid the hubbub of that ceaseless round of toil, men's hearts still throbbed when Duty called; that for a service

tenfold more responsible and dangerous than in the olden time they stepped out willingly ; that all the best traditions of the "Bluebacks" had descended to the "Robin Redbreasts" (1803), and been handed on by them to the Militia (1808), and burst forth again in the 9th Lancashires (1859), and burned with an increasing ardour in the bosoms of their present representatives, the Prince of Wales's Volunteers ; and that, anticipating any formal invitation, and, indeed, before the crisis grew to real gravity, a gallant band of these (amongst the first in England) had stepped forth, in answer to their colonel's invitation, and at once declared their readiness to serve abroad ; that, as the danger deepened, those who had gone back to the pursuits of peace rejoined the banner of the "Fighting Fortieth" without a murmur, and went forth with it to bloody war ; that the Militia—[1]who, together with the Volunteers,had latterly been linked with that great regiment—unanimously offered for this unexpected service ; and that the men who had so valiantly anticipated England's need now killed an idle

1 See "Warrington Volunteers, 1798—1898." By Walter Crompton and George Venn.

sneer by following up their protestations to a man. And those who could not serve the nation with their swords pulled out their purses with an unexampled liberality and promptitude, and I could see the gentler sex, with touching tenderness, providing their defenders with a host of little luxuries they lacked, and seeking in a score of ways to help to staunch their wounds—though many of their own poor hearts were bleeding—whilst the very school-girls of the town were moved by the prevailing wave of patriotism, and, with busy fingers, laboured to assist " the soldiers of the Queen." And in the Council Chamber—once located in the Market Place, now housed in the majestic home of Peter Patten and his heirs—the immemorial sound of strife was hushed while all men rallied round the town's chief citizen, and with one voice supported him in all that could be done to serve the state and vindicate the ancient honour of the town.

Moreover, in that venerable mansion by the Bridge, I perceived that there had been a candle lighted which should not go out again, and saw men turning fondly to the sacred memories of their immortal past with a new reverence which

boded well for the immediate future. Amid that reeking atmosphere, beneath that poisonous and continual pall, above the roar of commerce and the din of trade, the Eternal Voices called ; and, as the century closed in stress and storm, and through the narrow streets I saw the sturdy phalanxes of marching men, I seemed to catch a sudden glimpse of blue, to hear a strain of mystic music ; and, even as I gazed, the old streets were flooded with a quivering shaft of gold.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW WARRINGTON.

Once more I stood at Wilderspool, **1950.** amid the ruins of the Roman Camp. But everything had changed. The field where Mr. May had shown to me the site of *Veratinum* was securely fenced, and planted here and there with trees and flowers. The solid Roman road, together with the great rude stone foundations of the wall and buildings, were exposed in places, and the ancient wells were visible again, with roses, lilies, pæonies, and other old-world blooms about their brink. The Camp, indeed, was now a public pleasure ground, and, in appropriate halls and kiosks, I noticed maps, and plans, and pictures which, with various interesting relics, served to give the visitor a fair idea of the life of that far distant period from whence I had so lately come.

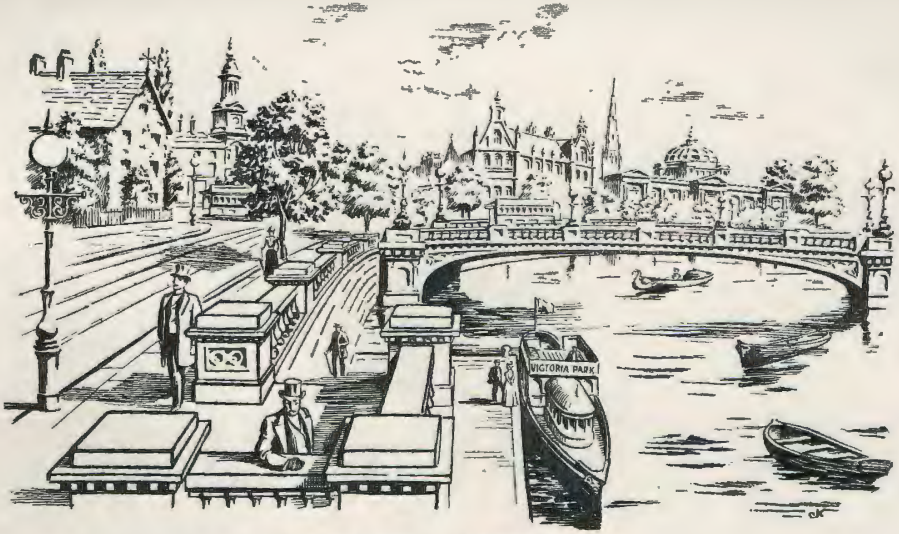
The Brewery remained, but was, I found, con-

ducted by the Corporation; and, beyond the Ship Canal, the suburbs of the town extended far into the leafy heart of Cheshire.

The bend of the old river had been turned into a mighty dock, with lesser docks diverging from it towards St. James's Church, and covering the major portion of the Arpley Meadows. Along the Docks were splendid warehouses, and by the quays great stately ships whose fashion was in many ways completely new to me. They still had masts, and spars, and rigging, but the masts were telescopic, and the rigging more for ornament than use. There was a curious dearth of funnels, and I found that nearly all these noble vessels were propelled by electricity, and that the magic force was generated, in most instances, on board the ships themselves.

I sauntered down the ancient Causeway, under lines of overarching limes, to a majestic Bridge. Beyond it, in a leafy semi-circle reaching from the River Deviation to the Weir, I descried a broad Embankment, fringed by stately buildings, and provided here and there with seats. And, in the centre of the Bridge, I saw a tablet

THE ARPLEY DOCKS.



THE MERSEY EMBANKMENT.

THE MERSEY EMBANKMENT.

setting forth in golden characters the story of its various predecessors.

I crossed the stream, observing, half concealed amid the greenery which well-nigh hid the gable of the Old Academy, and climbed, with glossy fingers, to its very eaves, another graceful tablet which, in terse and lucid phraseology, set forth the ancient building's claim to men's regard; whilst, over the stone porch and on the window-sills, were rustic-looking boxes filled with flowers. I went inside, and found that the Academy was once again the intellectual centre of the neighbourhood. The time-worn walls were panoramas of the town in all the ages, and everywhere I met the grand old faces of the local "Worthies" who had helped to make its fame. The rooms themselves were rich in literary relics, and the library contained a local literature which few, if any, towns in England equalled, and not one surpassed. And in this stately building, rightly termed "the most interesting house in Warrington," there periodically met the Warrington Society, the indirect descendant of that Warrington Institution which was founded by Giles Chippindall so long ago as 1812—its aim to fan the flame of local patriotism, and keep alive the best traditions of the past.

The hideous adjacent Railway Bridge had disappeared, and in its place I saw an airy structure pleasing in appearance, and of reasonable height ; for the railway had been raised and the level crossing abandoned, whilst the trains, propelled by electricity, slid by at an enormous speed, without emitting either smoke or steam. The River Deviation was completely cloaked in trees ; and I observed with pleasure that the Cricket Field still stood in its accustomed place, as green and smooth as ever, though graceful wharves, and works, and warehouses appeared to cover all the land beyond. I found, moreover, that the king of games maintained its old pre-eminence, and was reminded by a stalwart fellow who went by in flannels that the first County Match had taken place in Warrington (1864), and that, to-day, as then, we were well represented on the County Team. The Football Field I had observed in passing down the Causeway, and in that grand game, it seemed, we had not lost our former prowess, though we lived for something else as well.

I saw that Bridge Street had been adequately widened, and was wandering slowly up it once

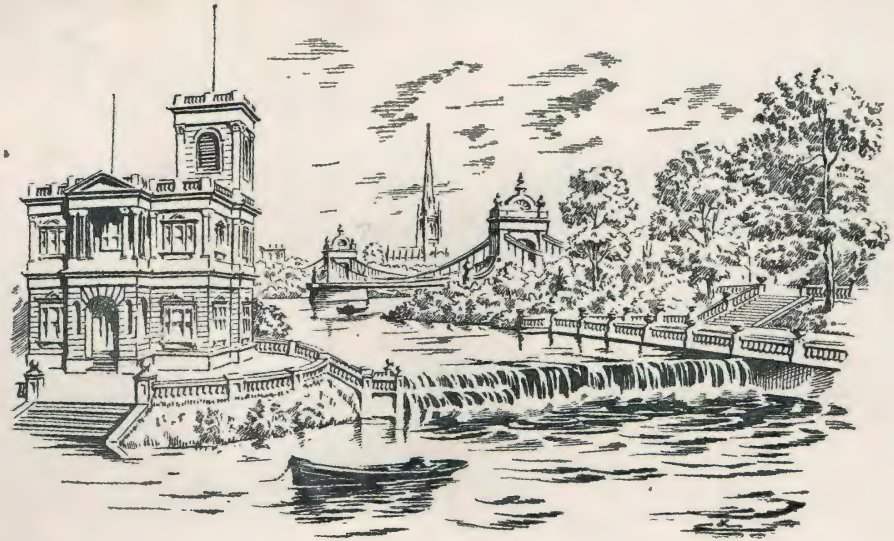
again when I observed a handsome tramcar which was going to "Victoria Park." I promptly mounted this, and found it singularly roomy and commodious. A portion of the car was labelled "Smoking," and there were various magazines and papers lying on a table in the centre. The car was self-contained, and moved along with great rapidity without the help of any gaping conduit or absurd entanglement of wires.

St. James's Road was once again the Latchford Causeway, and I noticed everywhere a fitness in the designations of the leading thoroughfares which had been wanting in the past. Some of these suggested local incidents or epochs, others bore the names of famous local men ; and every house which was associated with important episodes or personalities was dignified by a descriptive tablet. In consequence of this, a walk through Warrington was now a very pleasant and suggestive lesson in our local history.

The Latchford Causeway was a spacious thoroughfare, with handsome shops and buildings on each side of it, and quays and boat-houses beyond the buildings to the left, and here and there re-

freshing glimpses of the river. The old St. James's Cemetery, no longer locked and barred, was bright with grass and flowers, and quiet seats had been provided by the busy stream where age could calmly meditate upon the past amid the stir and bustle of the new time.

But, when we reached the Weir, a greater surprize than any of these awaited me. On the island to the left of it a handsome building stood, and, amid the foaming waters, I discerned some picturesque but curious water-wheels. A little above the Weir, a beautiful Suspension Bridge, which was evidently the work of an artist, stretched grandly out across the broad and pleasant stream—a new and stately link between the sister counties—and over it an endless line of traffic passed, the greater part of which was of a kind that was absolutely strange to me. There were horses, it is true, but they seemed to be principally used by well-dressed people who were out for pleasure ; there were cycles, too, on separate tracks, I found ; but by far the larger portion of the traffic moved along as silently and swiftly as though by magic. The waste wilderness of Howley had blossomed into



VICTORIA PARK.

an oasis of well-built works and houses, interspersed in all directions with umbrageous trees and flowers. I thought I caught the scent of hawthorn as we passed, whilst, in the rear, as beautiful as ever, I descried that miracle in stone which had for so many years stood calmly out against the sky in voiceless, but eloquent, rebuke of the squalor and the sordidness about it, transfigured by the sunshine, and no longer haunted by the nightmare of the smoke from the adjacent chimneys.

But, as we neared the entrance to Victoria Park, I noticed such tremendous changes that I thought it best to dismount and examine them more closely. Instead of the extensive area of somewhat low-lying meadows, with a yellow lodge, and a somewhat melancholy looking mansion at the end of a long cindered drive, I saw a noble road which wound from Black Bear Bridge, through pleasant houses, to the river's margin and the picturesque Suspension Bridge. It skirted an extensive and extremely beautiful domain approached by a majestic gateway. And, just within the handsome gates, which bore a brief inscription stating that the Park

had been acquired in order to commemorate the Borough and the Diamond Jubilees, I saw a clever statue of the famous Bluecoat boy whose story rivalled that of Whittington, and whose achievements were so intimately associated with the annals of his native town.

I sauntered slowly through a paradise of flower-beds or tarried in delicious avenues of scented bloom, and presently I reached a shady seat beyond a handsome balustrade which overlooked the foaming waters of the Weir. A pleasant looking, well-built fellow, with a face of much intelligence, was standing by, and, turning to him, I commented on the vigour of the vegetation, and especially upon the trees which I had seen upon the way.

"Those, like the Park," he said, "were the ulterior outcome of the Jubilee. The Committee appointed to take into consideration the most appropriate modes of celebrating it had suggested as one of these that trees should be planted in some of the main thoroughfares. Of course the fossils laughed at this"—

"Some of them," I blurted out, "would laugh

"at the eternal sunshine, and would dub the very stars a foolish waste of gold!"

He smiled at my impetuosity, and thoughtfully resumed:

"In spite of the plea that trees would not live in Warrington, and that it was another excuse for frittering away the hard-earned money of the suffering ratepayer, the trees eventually *were* planted, and *did* live; for, as you are probably aware, the 'Smoke Dragon' had been boldly grappled with, and Warrington provided the St. George."

"That was a difficulty in my time," I said, "which the responsible authorities deliberately shirked."

"It was so in many places," he observed, "and Parliament was forced, at last, to interfere. The Sanitary Committees, instead of firmly carrying out the law, had generally urged the inane excuse that plenty of smoke not only implied good trade, but was the inevitable corollary to it. Fortunately there were some who said that so much smoke was simply so much waste, and they persevered in their propaganda until they were

"strong enough not only to induce the legislature to make it as serious an offence to pollute the air with smoke as it had previously been to poison it with chemicals, but to entrust the carrying out of the Act embodying their views to independent Inspectors appointed by the Local Government Board. And it was astonishing, under the new *regime*, how speedily the manufacturers began to discover the desirability of introducing the necessary appliances. And the most simple, effective, and economical of these was due, as I have hinted, to the inventive genius of a Warringtonian."

"And so the trees were planted, and the town to-day is like a garden," I observed.

"How beautifully clear the water is, and how abundant, too," I added presently, as we sat listening to the low and pleasant murmur of the Weir. "When last I saw the Mersey, everybody with a taste for classical allusion compared it to the Styx, and everybody else described it as an open sewer."

"They did not do it any injustice," my friend replied. "A more foul and fetid current probably did not exist in all the desecrated borders of the County Palatine."

"Upon my word, there are fish in it!" I exclaimed, as we approached the margin.

"Yes," he responded; "bit by bit, the various authorities upon the upper portion of the river and its tributaries were compelled to adequately treat their sewage. The Joint Committee of the two adjacent counties, as the public, with increasing energy, began to back it up, grew gradually bolder. Every offender, whether corporate or individual, was at once reminded of his obligations, and severely fined if he neglected them. And, in due season, every drop of fluid, ere it passed into the noble stream, was purified by various methods which I need not name, and soon its inky channel turned to amber, and on its sandy bed—for there are not any mud-banks now—the salmon, banished for a century, began once more to find a home. So much for the water's clearness. As to its quantity, the Ship Canal—which ultimately passed into the hands of the two County Councils, and which had robbed us of our natural inheritance for years—was forced to face the problem; and, as some had all along predicted, by various ingenious engineering devices, they succeeded in securing all

"the water they needed for themselves without unfairly and unreasonably robbing us of ours. Everybody wished well to the new waterway, but nobody wished ill to the old river, and a little tact and a mutual spirit of compromise soon resulted in a satisfactory solution of a most difficult and complicated problem."

"Had you any difficulty in arranging to work your electric plant by means of the Weir?" I asked.

"Of course the plan was scouted as impracticable," he replied. "It was said that there was not power enough; that the fall was too low, and the water insufficient; and that any attempt to utilize it for this purpose would jeopardize other important interests. And, when we first resolved to light the town and run our tramcars by electric agencies, we quite ignored the possibilities suggested by the river, and built instead the great Electric Lighting Station you will probably have noticed on your way. We had the wisdom, though, to link it with our Intercepting Depôt, and to utilize the heat we generated there to generate, in turn, the light, and heat, and power with which we had promised to provide an

" enterprizing public. But the demand increased so rapidly that we were soon obliged to look for further sources of supply. New Intercepting Depôts came, and these were utilized in the same way. And still the public were not satisfied. And then we turned, at last, to the neglected Weir. The tides afforded us a further source of power ; and presently we yoked them both to our dynamos, applied the wind to the same use, and, now, from natural sources, we can manage to obtain the larger portion of the power we need. Every street and public building, as well as every shop and house, is lighted by electricity ; many are heated in the same way ; the trams are worked by it ; and I may add that there is scarcely a machine in Warrington which is not driven by the same economical and exceedingly cleanly force. Hence blue skies in the day time, and a mellow radiance which reminds one of the harvest moon at night."

" It is all very wonderful," I said, " and yet it is all very simple. I am proud of my old townsmen for what they have already accomplished, though, upon my word, I should have been ashamed of them if they had accomplished less. But I

"think I see masts, and spars, and funnels 'in the shadow of the spire.' Whatever is the meaning of that?"

"Oh, those are the Howley Docks," my friend rejoined. "If you are ready, we will stroll quietly on through the park, and past the Convalescent Home, in that direction."

I had seldom seen a more attractive park. The flowering trees and shrubs were at their best; the beds and borders were so many strips of rainbow; the grass was as soft as velvet; and the paths were broad and beautifully kept. Here and there were pretty rustic arbours, and secluded

"seats for whispering lovers made."

A fountain flung a glistening shower of diamonds into the air exactly opposite the well-remembered mansion whose new purpose had been indicated; and at various appropriate points I noticed great white terraces adorned with heroic figures in bronze, or marble statues of the town's most famous men. A life-like statue of the gracious monarch after whom the Park was named was prominent upon the central lawn.

The Convalescent Home belonged, like the Infirmary and the Hospitals, to the municipality, for it was rightly felt that men's infirmities should not be left for their alleviation to the fluctuating chances of the public charity. It was a model of cleanliness and good arrangement. The town was so healthy and accidents were now so rare that both this and the larger Hospital which overlooked Bank Park were seldom full, and often empty; whilst fevers and other contagious diseases had been almost absolutely banished by the increasing attention which was paid to every sanitary detail, and the wonderful discoveries which had done much to reduce them, all over the country, to a minimum. There was some talk, my friend declared, of turning the Home into a Picture Gallery, and, indeed, its pleasant rooms were now made doubly bright and cheering to the occasional inmates by the well-selected specimens of local and imperial art which graced the softly shaded walls.

I was vastly pleased with all I saw, and especially when I was told that the land contiguous to the Old Warps estate, and not included in the original purchase, had been since acquired, and

that the whole area between the road, the river, and the Old Quay Canal belonged to the Corporation.

"But where are all the jerry buildings?" I enquired. "I have some shadowy recollection that the purchase of the Park excited, at the time, considerable opposition, and that the refractory Councillors were only reconciled by the prospect of being able to lease the land at remunerative ground rents. I do not see a sign of any buildings at all which are not attractive in their style, and an ornament rather than an eyesore. The wretched habitations which sprang up, in my time, with such appalling rapidity are conspicuous by their absence, and, instead of long rows of dreary dwellings, mostly out of line, and a chaos of heart-sickening back-yards, I can see nothing but gardens, and, beyond, a park-like recreation ground."

"Well," he said, "the few perceived from the first that it would be pure sacrilege to turn so beautiful a place to such base uses. They saw that the life was more than meat, and the body than ground rents; and that the happiness of a town did not consist so much in the abundance

"of its population, or even in the lowness of its rates, as in its health, its comfort, and its sightliness. Whatever private landowners might think fit to do with their broad acres, and upon whatever architectural horrors the petty speculator might expend his borrowed cash, the Corporation had a higher duty. It was the custodian of the *common* wealth, and was not bound to think of anything except the public good. As you say, there had, with mushroom-like rapidity, sprung up, on every hand, a motley company of dismal houses in ill-shaped and crowded streets, and the tendency had been to cover every vacant spot—however interesting on account of its associations, or however manifestly meant for other purposes—with bricks and mortar, flung together with an utter disregard of anything except the rate of interest they were calculated to return. The few who were fortunate enough to have souls above all this insisted that it would be a monstrous thing to hand over even a foot of the estate for such an object; that the need for jerry-buildings was not apparent; that the result upon the rates would be almost inappreciable; and that the best return for the money which the Corporation had expended in the purchase of the

"property would be in fresh air, and health, and added opportunities of happiness for the toilers who could not afford to escape, each night, into the unsullied freshness of the adjacent country. These were new ideas, and they were opposed with a zeal that was born of blindness, and a perseverance worthy of a better cause. But the Progressives were even more determined than the Stick-in-the-muds, and they had reason on their side. And the masses—who were becoming singularly clear-sighted—backed them up with voice and vote, and victory, of course, was the result. Better still, as time went on, the borough got an Act which stipulated not alone that each new house put up within its recently extended boundary should be both decently sanitary and tolerably well built—for instance, every house contains a bath—but that that it should not too openly violate the canons of good taste and artistic propriety; whilst, thanks to another Act, it became possible to so amend the By-laws as to insist that every man who leased his land for building should set aside, in every plot, a certain specific proportion as an open space. You will see, as we return, that there are small air-cells, or open spaces, all over Warrington, in

"addition to the great reservoirs of sweetness which are popularly known as parks."

At this moment, I was attracted by a beautiful strain of music, proceeding from the extremity of the leafy avenue up which we were quietly strolling; and the next moment we came upon an artistic erection charmingly designed, adorned with emblematic figures, and, beneath its airy roof, a company of musicians in attractive uniform.

"That is the Corporation Band," my friend explained, as I looked up enquiringly. "Formerly, the Association of Borough Bands provided the inhabitants with an occasional treat, on summer evenings, in the Park in Sankey Street; and the Council, recognizing, even then, the importance of elevating the public taste and administering to the public enjoyment by the provision of good music, had subsidized the organization, and encouraged it in various other ways. The money was so well spent, and the performances were productive of so much pleasure, that the grant was gradually increased, and coupled with a condition that the bands should not confine their attentions to the

"central Park, but should from time to time perform in all the wards, and especially in all the other parks"—

"The other parks?" I asked. "How many have you?"

"We have five in all," he said, "and each of them will please you quite as much as this. I was going on to say that the taste for music grew so general, and the parks became so popular, that, after a time, it was decided to permanently maintain a band composed of skilful instrumentalists at the exclusive cost of the Corporation, and to arrange for it to play daily, as well as every night, in one or other of the more prominent centres of resort. As you will readily conceive, the influence of this new movement is extremely salutary. But we had better cross the Bridge and proceed to the Howley Docks, I think, for it is noon already, and you will be getting hungry."

The road which led to Church Street was extremely broad, and shaded by continuous foliage; but, diverging suddenly towards the right, we reached the spot which had been indicated, and I discovered a gigantic basin

filled from end to end with vessels hailing from all parts of that great realm of Oceana which regarded Warrington as one of its chief ports. The low-lying land beyond St. Elphin's Park was simply one huge dock, and the eastern half of the town had been brought into immediate contact with the ships of all nations. I was wondering how they had managed to get there, but, as we passed the timber yard which I so well remembered, and paced along the mighty quay, the riddle speedily solved itself, for I could see a sort of branch canal, as wide as the great waterway, which entered the Dock on its south-eastern side, and ran out in a broad silver streak to a point a little above the Latchford Railway Bridge. Thus all localities were served, and the idea which had dominated one of the original promoters of the scheme, and exposed him to not a little criticism at the time, was indirectly realized; for the Canal which, much to his disapproval, had taken a line that was sadly wide of Warrington, was now directly linked, by means of this short tributary, to that particular portion of the town which had always been the principal centre of the local carrying trade.

We lunched in a delightful hostelry in Church Street which appeared familiar. Surely it was underneath this quaint old roof that I had seen "the Great Protector" pen those memorable letters! And yet that could not be, for I had found with some astonishment that we were in the middle of the twentieth century. The puzzle was, however, soon explained. The General Wolfe had been demolished, and its charming predecessor cleverly restored. Towards the previous century's close, I had observed, with keen regret, the gradual disappearance of too many of the old houses which had been so rich in memories, and oftentimes so quaintly picturesque; and I discovered, with immense surprise and pleasure, that, of late, the best of them had been rebuilt, in many cases, on the very site of the original building. A tablet generally distinguished them, though, in the present generation, this was scarcely needful, for each child could tell their history and gloried in their fame.

The fare we got at the old inn was plain enough, but admirably cooked and served; and the ale was of such a character as to make one

really understand that Warrington was famous for the production of that much-abused, but eminently English beverage. The house in which we were seated appeared to be the only public-house in this part of the street, and, I ascertained, upon enquiry, that a revolution had occurred in the liquor traffic. The greatest care had to be taken that all intoxicating drinks were absolutely pure, and beer was brewed, as in the good old days, from simple hops and malt. The local Councils all over the Kingdom had been entrusted by Parliament with the licensing authority, and, in this way, Local Option had been brought about without any necessity for the Direct Veto. One by one, the houses which were structurally unsuited for the trade, or not necessitated by the legitimate requirements of the neighbourhood, had been withdrawn, a reasonable compensation being allowed wherever the equities of the case appeared to demand it. All new licences were vested in the Corporation, and the houses worked under their supervision. The best of everything was sold, and every inducement was offered to the workingman to quench his thirst in coffee, or to soothe his troubled breast with tea, or to make reasonably

merry over various temperance drinks which were neither flatulent in their effects nor nauseating in their flavour. I tried a cup of coffee, after lunch, and recognized the prince of beverages at once. The cream had evidently come from a cow, and I had not any feeling that we were paying for coffee and drinking mud and water. The rest of the fare was equally good, and the inns were once more serving their original purpose—that of providing wholesome refreshment for both man and beast at reasonable prices, and in attractive and uncontaminated surroundings. "Old Noll" looked down upon us—warts and all—from above the ancient fire-place, and the scent of lilac floated in through the open window from the broad and pleasant street which, even in my time, had always been the finest in the town, and was now a handsome boulevard that was fit for any city in the Kingdom. In spite of many ingenious attempts at encroachment, and many purblind arguments to prove that it was too absurdly broad for anything, it was of uniform width, and the width was that of the portion which had formerly been the widest part. The filthy hovels which had done so much to spoil its spaciousness were all replaced by handsome

shops and houses. Howley Lane had been succeeded by the splendid thoroughfare which crossed the beautiful Suspension Bridge above the Weir. The houses at its north-eastern corner, with the exception of the Model Cottages —maintained as a sort of monument of the reforming zeal of [1]Thackeray's "model curate"— had disappeared, and the land on which they stood had been added to the adjacent garden, which was beautiful with bloom and bud. "Battleton Rectory" was almost hidden with creepers, and had entirely lost its old neglected look. The Ring o' Bells still nestled at the gates, as did the pretty house just opposite; but the adjacent cottages had disappeared, and the Church was more than half as long again as it had been when last I worshipped there. I went inside. The galleries had been removed, and many beautiful new monuments and windows added. A stately service was proceeding, and the place was packed from end to end. Upon the wings of a new ritual my soul went out to God, and, when the white-haired rector rose and spoke to us in silver tones, I found that Art and Music were employed, at last, to make men free, and

1 The Rev. William Quekett.

not to fetter them ; and that the only blasphemy was that which sought to chain the mind to the exploded dogmas of a darker age.

The various Nonconforming Churches had, I learnt, been wise enough to federate amongst themselves long years before, and, latterly, had federated—on a mutually satisfactory basis—with the grand old Mother Church ; for all of them were one in the love of God and of their fellow-men, and in the high resolve to find the truth,

"Whether it" lurked "in hells or" hid "in heavens;"

and all were emulous to link the life on earth with the diviner life which penetrated to the utmost bounds of every star. The noblest elements of all the creeds were interwoven cleverly into the creed of the United Church, and every phase of thought and aspiration found, in one or other of its services, the spiritual sustenance it craved. And so sane and sweet and elevating was this broader faith that it flowed out in healing waves to every portion of the Empire, and was gradually winning all the world. The Greek and Roman Churches, too, had lost their old intolerance, cast off the iron jackets of their

outworn formulas, and, latterly, begun to yearn towards that real Christendom which copied Christ, and laid its deep foundations in His heart of love.

The neighbouring collegiate premises had been considerably extended, and I noticed, with a quick sigh of relief, that the additions, unlike some of those which I remembered, were in harmony with the original buildings, and helped to form a *tout ensemble* not unworthy of one of the principal educational centres of the north. The Clergy Daughters had been driven from us, years before, by the incessant smoke— they lacked the faith to wait awhile—and the Training College had been broadened out into a branch of the Victoria University. It still, however, taught the teachers with astonishing success ; but both sexes freely passed its learned doors, the humblest scholar in our elementary schools could enter it, and it could rival Oxford in the fame of its degrees and the extent and the profundity of its many-sided learning.

We took a tram at this point, and I was quite prepared to find St. Elphin's Park a mass of houses, or perhaps the site of some great works.

No! There it lay, as green and beautiful as ever, but under skies that were bluer than was their wont, with trees (no longer stunted and half choked with smoke) on every side of it, and dotted here and there in pleasing clumps as well. The inartistic property which, in my time, had begun to rapidly encroach upon and threaten Fairfield Hall—the home of "Mrs. Malaprop"—had been superseded by pleasant gabled buildings, some of them half-timbered, many of them clothed in creepers, and all of them cleanly and inviting; and the Hall itself was still a portion of the College, its high-walled and ancient gardens being open to the public under certain sensible restrictions.

As we proceeded on our way, I found that Manchester Road had been materially widened, and that the trams ran on to that great city on the Irwell which was joined with us by two unbroken lines of buildings; but, much as I desired to visit Bruche and its vicinity—for it was dear to me through many a tender memory of my early days—the time was passing, and we had a score of things to see; and so we quietly dismounted at the Cemetery Inn, which stood

in its old position, still clad in honeysuckle, but, like every other inn in Warrington, now under corporate management.

The Cemetery, alas, was twice as large as it had been when I was wont to wander there and sadly muse on the Great Mystery; but the average of human life was rising every year. Tradition said that a man named William Leyland had been born in Warrington in 1593, resided there for close upon three-quarters of a century, and died in Ireland at the age of a hundred and thirty-nine. Folks did not often live as long as that even in "the *new* Warrington;" but many lived to be a hundred, and, like him, retained their ripest faculties until the end.

> "Mild was the slow necessity of death,"

and men had learnt so much, by persistent and unprejudiced investigation, of the Life Beyond, that they did not any longer dread the final journey, but started out upon it

> "Calm as a voyager to some distant land,
> And full of wonder, full of hope, as he."

There was a marble Crematorium in the lower portion of the grounds; and I found that, every

year, the number of those whose bodies were committed "to the purifying flame" increased. We went inside, and I was touched unspeakably as I discovered name after name of well-remembered townsmen, the best of them with modest monuments which only half revealed their worth.

We mounted another tram at this point, which ran by Marsh House Lane to Orford Hall and Bewsey. I noticed, as we passed, that Padgate Lane was just as wide as its great neighbour, and that all the newer streets were of definite geometric shape. Many of them were lined with trees, and, better still, in every area there were ample open spaces, sometimes laid out as lawns, or used as cricket fields; sometimes enclosed as gardens, or as orchards. There was, indeed, a sense of apple blossom in the air, and a blaze of pink and milky bloom closed many a pleasant vista as the tram moved swiftly by.

The Barracks still remained, but, partly as the salutary outcome of the dreadful war which closed the previous century, our military methods had been greatly changed. We had not any regular army, but each lad was trained at school

in all the rudiments of drill and discipline, and voluntary service, on amended lines, achieved the rest. Some years elapsed before the regulars were quite dispensed with, and, indeed, the immediate outcome of the War had been to increase them ; but the Volunteers had more than justified the hopes of their best friends, and they had been so well backed up by the contingents from the Colonies that gradually all men came to see that England's children over all the world would fight her battles to a man, if need arose ; and that all the conscript armies of the continent were quite unequal to a force like this. Moreover, folks had come to see, at last, that it was simply fatuous to fight at all until the *pros* and *cons* of the dispute had been impartially considered by a suitable tribunal, and, in nine-and-ninety cases out of every hundred, arbitration obviated the necessity for what was little less than international murder.

We paused at Orford Avenue. The obelisk which stood, of old, at its extremity, in honour of the famous naturalist who died there at the age of ninety-three, had been restored, and in the Avenue itself great trees once more spread out

their waving arms in the soft sunshine. The railway bridge which blocked the view of the fine white-fronted, many-windowed mansion had been tardily replaced by a lighter and more artistic erection, so arranged as to offer as little obstruction to the eyes as possible. I remembered an anecdote which said that Mr. Beamont, even then a man of very venerable years, had talked of planting trees to hide the embankment, and spoken of the project just as hopefully as though he had expected to live for ever. He *had* lived to an astonishing age, and he had left behind him a collection of antiquarian literature which had done much to fling around the whole locality the halo of romance. But, unluckily, romance was not a leading characteristic of the Warrington of his day, and it had been reserved for later generations to exemplify their pride in the quaint traditions and historic memories of the town, and to recognize his splendid efforts to preserve them by a marble monument upon the central lawn.

The grounds about the house had lost that air of grime and sickliness which had begun to creep upon them in my time, and had recovered and, indeed, improved upon their former fame. In

great glass houses all the richest tropic fruits and flowers expanded in a genial atmosphere ; strange forest trees and blooms abounded all about the velvet lawns ; and, as we rambled to and fro, amid a maze of blossom and a perfect paradise of sweet perfume, my fancy wandered irresistibly to Kew.

The Hall contained the Beamont manuscripts and a complete collection of Mr. Beamont's works, and was rendered additionally interesting by a representative collection of the *flora* and the *fauna* of the neighbourhood.

" How did the Corporation manage to secure this valuable addition to their property? " I asked.

" Oh, it came into the market, and they began to see that the town was growing so rapidly in this direction that it was desirable to secure another outlet for the crowded population," was my friend's reply. " A general disgust at the continuous encroachment of the slums, and their scarcely more respectable successors—the ordinary residential streets—set in ; and it was deemed expedient to secure as much breathing-room as possible in every quarter of the town, and to

"everywhere oppose to the rising desert of jerry-buildings an occasional oasis of greenery."

"But what about the ratepayers?" I asked.

"Of course they grumbled a good deal at first," he answered; "but, as I have previously hinted, they gradually began to see that happiness and high rates were better than misery and low ones. There was, however, still a powerful minority who guaged everything by £ s. d., and the opposition of these enlightened folk would probably have prevailed, or, at any rate, done much to retard the general tendency towards progress, had it not been for the fact that Warrington was situated so advantageously that nothing could prevent its growth. New shops and works arose on every side. The population rapidly increased. The rateable value of the town went up by leaps and bounds, and the rates were properly apportioned, without respect of persons or of trades. The Gas and Water Works, entirely re-organized, and under increasingly efficient management, began to return magnificent profits, and the profits derived from the supply of electric light, and heat, and power increased. The Sanitary Department, instead of being a drag upon us, com-

"menced to show a handsome surplus, for not one particle of all our sanitary refuse is allowed to run to waste. From the very clinker which survives our furnaces we manufacture admirable flags and setts, for example; and, just recently, the noxious gases which we had formerly endeavoured to destroy in our combustion chambers have been turned into most useful products and begun to swell our annual returns.

"These were also much augmented by the profits from the Tramways, the Abattoir, which is amongst the finest in Lancashire (Warrington doing a very extensive trade in Canadian cattle), and the civic inns or hostelries. Then Parliament—what a poor blind body it used to be!—after years of futile prodding, woke up, one day, to the fact that it was an anomalous absurdity, as well as a monstrous injustice, that, whilst every man who built a house was bound to contribute to the rates, the man who leased the land to him, often at an enormous price, and usually without the slightest regard for the public convenience, did not pay a single penny, although the value of the land had risen without any effort on his part, and entirely owing to the

"gradual extension of the town. A Bill was brought in to render ground rents rateable, and that did much to furnish us with the funds to carry out the alterations which you have already noted, and of which there are more to see.

"Our sources of revenue have been so numerous, however, that I have altogether omitted to mention some of the most important. You will probably remember that, after years of suicidal inactivity, the Corporation began to purchase property in various parts of the town, primarily for purposes of public improvement, afterwards with a view to its prospective worth. Much of this, as you will readily imagine, they were able to sell, to lease, or to rent at greatly enhanced values. Moreover, they began to extend their activities in various other directions. You have, I think, referred to the improved appearance of the houses. That commenced in this way. Someone pointed out that there was not any earthly reason why the habitations of the working-classes should not be tolerably sightly, as well as reasonably comfortable. A young, imaginative, and artistic firm of architects—quite a novelty in

"the town, by the by—was taken into consultation on the subject. Figures and details were carefully threshed out, and it was found that, by a little forethought, it was possible to build exceedingly presentable, and, indeed, extremely pretty houses, in a variety of pleasing styles, to pay from four to five per cent. Port Sunlight had afforded an inspiring precedent, and an Artistic Dwellings Company, Limited, was formed to carry out the idea. It took amazingly. Commencing in a modest way, it speedily found that workingmen—he smiled as he said this—really preferred to live in pleasant surroundings provided that they could manage it at a reasonable cost. The first few houses, which were erected experimentally, were let at once. Others followed them in quick succession. Gardens were attached in many instances, and they were soon in such demand that the sheer necessities of competition compelled the speculative builders to copy the example of the Company, employ qualified architects, and provide artistic dwellings on their own account, or else to cease to build at all. Hence the pretty gabled, terraced, castellated, turreted, or otherwise ornamented cottages you see on every hand,

"many of them built upon the actual pattern of the picturesque old edifices of a bygone age. Presently the Corporation itself stepped into the field, took over some of the best of them, and erected better still in various parts of the town. Of course, they were able to borrow and to build more cheaply than anybody else, and, as a matter of fact, are now the principal local property owners. This, as you will readily perceive, is another and continually increasing source of revenue, and the indirect result of it all has been to effect the gradual doom of Slumdom, and to make the place as beautiful as it is prosperous."

"I seem to have some recollection of having either heard or dreamt that this wonderful Corporation of yours has also taken over the management of some of the principal local industries," I ventured to observe.

"That is so," he said. "Several of our largest works belong to the town, and we are continually extending our activities in this direction. All over the country, indeed, national and municipal enterprize is gradually superseding that of individual firms or companies. We have had to

"feel our way, and, even yet, are proceeding cautiously ; but far-sighted men had seen for years that there was not any logical reason why the State could not carry us as well as our letters, for example ; or why the town or village could not make iron or leather say, as well as gas, and supply its inhabitants with bread, or beef, or milk as well as water. The only difference appeared to be that the proceeds would go into the pockets of the whole community instead of into the pocket of the plutocrat, and that all would benefit instead of half a dozen in a hundred. Not that the half dozen are allowed to suffer by the change. They are bought out at a reasonable price ; and so cautiously, and so fairly, and with such a strict regard for vested interests, are all these changes introduced that nobody has any legitimate reason to complain, unless, indeed, it be those who are left, and who have to adjust their hours and wages to the civic standard. This is only one of many towns in 'Merrie England' which are witnessing a peaceful evolution of the fruits of which you are able to judge for yourself."

Meanwhile, we had been walking slowly down the Avenue, and, now, we got into another tram

which was labelled "Bewsey." As we rode along towards the quaint old manor I so well remembered, I observed that nearly all the streets had wooden pavements, and was struck, for the twentieth time, by certain ornamental shafts which rose at regular intervals, sometimes by the sides of the houses, sometimes from the neat and well-flagged resting-places which were thoughtfully provided here and there for the convenience of pedestrians who had to cross the street. In other localities, instead of these, I noticed curious, but handsome, lamp-posts ; and I looked in vain for any of the grids which used to mar the centre of the road. I began to put two and two together, and was not very much surprized when my friend, who had apparently been watching me, exclaimed that the shafts were used for ventilating the sewers.

"But we are still engaged in introducing improvements," he exclaimed. "At first, we were glad to simply turn our deleterious emanations out into the upper air, and leave the process of their purification to Nature. Then we adopted the ornamental lamp-posts, and passed them through the heat which, by a special arrangement, we are

"able to generate in the peculiar globes you see; after that, we tried, with more or less success, to draw the whole of the gas into the Destructors, and to destroy the elements of poison there. Then, when we had achieved the task of utilizing the actual fumes from the Destructors themselves, we began to experiment with the sewer-gas; and now, from even that, by judicious treatment and by well-considered chemical combinations, we are able to produce several very valuable commercial commodities."

"Upon my word, the alchemists are altogether out of it!" I said. "There does not appear to be any limit to your achievements!"

"We have still to find the Elixir Vitæ," he said, with a sigh. "As for the Philosopher's Stone, nobody cares much about that. We do not measure our wealth by our gold nowadays."

We had passed the residence of "Sarah Grand"—with the accustomed tablet—on our left, and I noticed that the neighbouring embankments of the railway were half hidden with laburnum trees, through which, at intervals, a line of elegant and most commodious cars went

swiftly by. The bridge at the extremity of Bewsey Street was much improved, and, as we reached it, I peered curiously in the direction of the Forge. It was even busier than usual, but it was not any longer an Inferno in its mingled soot and flame. I sought in vain, indeed, for any signs of smoke; the chimneys I discovered looked like monuments; and their dusky summits, my companion told me, were encircled every evening with a silver diadem of stars, and flung their rich electric radiance not only into every corner of the mighty works, but far out across the roofs and gables of the town.

The trams ran down another noble avenue —the Boteler Drive—into the adjacent valley, passing, on the way, a singular electric railway, built upon a novel principle which enabled the peculiar cars—swung on a central line exactly like a pair of panniers on a horse's back—to get from Liverpool to Manchester in fifteen minutes; but, as I watched one whirling by, at a velocity which almost took my breath away, my comrade suddenly directed my attention to an extraordinary object somewhat like a mighty bird, which soared above us for a moment and receded suddenly,

and told me, then, that even the electric railway was eclipsed in speed by the ærial cars which, moved by the same magic force, and based upon the laws of avitation, now bore crowds of passengers to their far destinations through the sunny reaches of the upper air.

"I always felt that we should one day solve *that* problem," I declared. "And I am glad to see that you have solved it on the lines which Nature indicated from the first. Balloons are miserable makeshifts when we have the insects and the birds to copy from. And you have probably eclipsed the fishes too?"

"Yes, we can navigate the dim depths of the sea as readily as we can float across its sapphire bosom in the sunshine, or outride the roaring surges of the storm. And in all these triumphs of invention we are largely obligated to that potent force whose history a Warringtonian was the first to trace. But, though [1]a Warringtonian foretold the phonograph so long ago as 1809, I do not think that even Priestley,

1 See "Satire" by T. K. Glazebrook in "A Guide to South-Port, North Meoles, in the County of Lancaster: with a Brief Account of the Places in its Immediate Neighbourhood."

"in his grandest moments, could have ventured to foresee the vast developments which have been made in electricity."

"What has become of all your labyrinth of wires?" I said. "They used to be at once an eyesore and an inconvenience, if not a positive source of danger."

"They are concealed in spacious subterranean tunnels," he explained, "and our telegraphy has long been mainly wireless. We can, moreover, now transmit an image or sensation over unimaginable distances as easily as we could once transmit a sound. Not only can the English lad in Australasia converse with his old mother or the sweet-eyed lass he loves though oceans roll between, but he can *see* them—nay, can actually *kiss* them," he proceeded with a smile; "and, when the sun has set in England, we can catch its golden rays in our reflectors from the far realms of the west, and pass them on, and send them forth again, and realize, to some extent, the brightness of continual day. Many of the lamps which you have seen, indeed, are not electrical at all, but solar, though the power which sets them both aglow is, after all, the

"same. All forms of energy are now transmissible by this new Genie of the Lamp which puts Aladdin and his mighty servitor into the shade."

I did not laugh at him, as might, perhaps, have been expected; for I had read, long years before, in [1]a forgotten book, some forecast of this great discovery, and the experiences of even my dull century had proved to me that only fools presumed to set a limit to the conquests of the human mind. And I knew that

> "thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,
> And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns."

We had turned into the Bewsey valley now, but I sniffed in vain for any signs of Sankey Brook, and had begun to wonder what had happened to the yellow old Canal when, as we rode beneath the Electric Railway, I perceived them both in front of me, each clear as crystal, and each, my comrade told me, full of fish. Upon the right, extending as far as Winwick, I observed a mass of houses, intermixed with fields

1 "The Disk: A Prophetic Reflection." By E. A. Robinson and G. A. Wall. Griffith, Farran, Okeden, & Welsh. 1884.

and gardens, and, a little to the left of the quaint old church, still standing nobly out upon its tiny hill, a huge and handsome building in which I immediately recognized the Asylum.

"It was only being built in my time," I remarked. "I suppose it will be much larger now, and full of life's unfortunates?"

"Ah, no!" he answered cheerily. "It is not half full, and it is getting emptier every year. Heredity, and Drink, and Sorrow were the grisly sisterhood who darkened the windows of so many minds which might have revelled otherwise in God's sweet sunshine. But people do not any longer venture to bring children into the world unless they and their immediate ancestors have had a tolerably healthy record, and they have too much self-respect to get drunk for pleasure, and are too content to get drunk from sheer misery. Health and Happiness are the real antidotes to the Asylum!"

The town stretched out on every side to a similar distance; but everywhere it was intermixed so pleasantly with rural sights and sounds that one did not need to go into the country for

green fields and wholesome air. And Bewsey was devoted absolutely to the silvan deities who found in Warrington so many worshippers. Even in my time, when not a mile away the sky was black with one unbroken cloud, it nestled so quietly in its valley and amongst its trees that nobody would have dreamed—unless he had been told—that he was on the very margin of one of the busiest towns in Lancashire. But not only had the smoke been banished and the stream been cleansed—the whole estate was one huge pleasure-ground! And thousands came to see it who resided miles on miles away. Indeed, it drew almost as many visitors as Haddon, in the neighbouring county, for, like Haddon, it could boast its own strange legend, and everything which reverent antiquarian knowledge could suggest had been devised to lend to it the atmosphere of those old times in which its chimneys first looked out across the trees, and its ancient halls were gay with long-forgotten feasts and vividly-remembered tragedies. The moat had been restored, and was full of gold fish. The modern additions to the Hall had been removed, and it had quite regained its old appearance. The room distinguished as the scene of that dark deed

of which John Fitchett sang, and which had passed into a local legend, was open to the public, and in it and in the other rooms the furniture and the surroundings were those of that dim day commemorated on the lips of the old chroniclers, and now so vividly recalled. One thought of Holyrood and Rizzio as he gazed upon the floor which was said to bear indelibly the stain of blood. In other rooms were various interesting local relics, and curious illustrations of the manners and the customs of the age in which the tragedy occurred. Old manuscripts and missals glistened in the mullioned chambers. Quaint faces of great lords and ladies looked down from the eloquent, though voiceless walls. The ivy clustered still around the diamond panes, and the lawn in front of the old door was even greener than it used to be when I, on certain well remembered afternoons, played tennis there, and the woods more beautiful than in the golden evenings when I had wandered thither with some laughing maid, and felt that life was strangely fair.

There were many interesting spots round Warrington, but none which rivalled Bewsey Hall. The noble park beyond it and the more preten-

tious mansion it enshrined were also portions of the public heritage. In the daisied fields around golf still disputed vainly for supremacy with cricket, and a dozen other pastimes made the summer evenings merry, and attracted hundreds from the turmoil of the town. The New Hall itself was a sort of club house, specially fitted up for the convenience of the devotees of these and various other manly sports. There was still a good deal of game in the vicinity, for *unmanly* sports like murdering pheasants, or putting pellets into hares, had ceased to seem amusing as the people grew more civilized and more humane ; and most men wondered, now, how anyone could ever call it "sport" to act the part of a mere butcher, and without the butcher's excuse.

I had seen much which had pleased me in my ramble, but nothing that had given me quite the satisfaction I derived from what I witnessed here. Each part of the compact estate was more or less familiar to me, and I had often vaguely hoped that some day some of it might come into the keeping of the town. And to-day the town possessed it every inch, with all its treasures of quaint legend and of sweet association ; and its

ivied manor, and its big half-timbered hall, its velvet lawns, and glassy moat, and waving woods, and incense-breathing fields, belonged to everybody, and would administer delight and health to generations yet unborn.

"Thank God," I said, devoutly, "for such a treasure-house of beauty and fresh air!"

"And thank the late lord," my companion added, "for the generous heart which prompted him, some years ago, to bequeath, in perpetuity, the rich possession to the town!"

On leaving Bewsey, we proceeded by another tram past Clapgates Farm—which bore the usual descriptive tablet—up Lovely Lane (and it *was* lovely now) to Sankey. Everywhere I noticed evidences of progression, and even here—in the very centre of a nest of manufactories—the streets were broad and clean, and often lined with trees; the houses pleasant, and, as frequently as not, begirt with gardens. We still made wire and soap for half the world, and most of the old works which I remembered stood in this vicinity; but practically all of them were under corporate management, and all their former hideousness

was gone. For it was now considered quite as bad to build an ugly factory or workshop as to erect an ugly church. For work was just as much a part of life as worship, and both a sacrament if rightly understood.

I learnt with pleasure, too, that, long ago, the Corporation had fulfilled their pledge to treat their sewage ere they turned it into the adjacent stream, instead of selfishly rejoicing in the strange immunity from prosecution which their situation on a tidal stream conferred. The low-lying land along the river (which was thick with shifting masts and sails) had been converted into a great Sewage Farm, and served both Warrington and Widnes. Indeed, the towns were practically one by this, and Widnes, I was told, as much improved as Warrington. Our dwindling trade in glass and our half forgotten trade in pottery had both come back to us; we built enormous vessels in our monster ship-yards; our printing presses were as famous as in the remembered time of William Eyres; and I found that quite a score of other industries had gradually been added to our ancient list, a number of them absolutely new to me.

But we had not time to tarry, and turned our faces towards the centre of the town. I was glad to find that Liverpool Road, like all the other great main arteries, was very wide, and admirably paved, and lined with trees ; and that the Railway Bridge was broadened out to the same dimensions, and made as beautiful as it was broad, for the State had taken over all the railways, and dividends were now subordinated to the public good. The trams, of course, ran right to Liverpool, and it was linked with us almost as closely as the sister city on the Irwell. As we strolled across the Bridge, I sought in vain for the huge hoardings which had formerly saluted the expectant traveller with a vulgar welcome, and haunted him, like a nightmare, at every corner of his path. On reflection, it occurred to me that I had not passed a single hoarding all the day. Instead of these, however, I remembered having seen, in places, pretty iron kiosks, resembling those which dot the leafy streets of Paris, and usually serve as paper or tobacco shops, as well as advertising stations. I found that stringent laws had been adopted to prevent the disfigurement of either town or country by the crude monstrosities which used to

make me positively moan at times, and nothing of a less artistic character than these elegant and often very handsome kiosks was now allowed. And hence the streets were no longer strewn with crops of tattered paper, and the world no longer reeled beneath a universal plague of pills. Advertising was not so necessary as in the age of unrestricted competition, and most of it was done, I found, in the newspapers—surely the proper place for it!

At the suggestion of my friend, we turned down Parker Street to look at the new Railway Station, one of the finest in the Kingdom; and then passed on to the magnificent Police Court which had risen upon the site of the Old Barracks, afterwards the Technical Institute. It was a very handsome building, and was much too big, I gathered, for its purpose. For, with increasing comfort, knowledge, temperance, and self-respect, not only lunacy, but crime grew ever less; and, though we still had an efficient body of policemen, they were generally better occupied than in laboriously dragging drunkards off to gaol. They acted, I discovered, as the Ambulance and Fire Brigade, amongst a number

of new duties, though accidents and even fires were rare, so adequate were the precautions now in general use, and so effective the appliances for dealing with the element which once played deadly havoc in the town.

Proceeding up Museum Street, I found that an extensive and successful new Technical Institute had—somewhat stupidly—been stuck between Parr Hall and the Gymnasium; and that, joined with it, there was a great Industrial Museum, born of the Industrial Exhibitions which had closed the previous century, and of an old idea of the Chamber of Commerce, now immensely strong, and occupying an extensive range of rooms in the same building. Here every manufacture in the town was taught by skilful teachers to all who had the wish to learn; there was not a solitary apprentice who was not scientifically trained in his particular craft; and all were emulous of the distinctions which the Institute was able to confer, and proud to place their skill on record in one or other of the noble rooms of the Museum.

The Museum, Library, and Art Gallery had been extended almost to Parr Hall—half hidden

by the spreading branches of some great wisterias and were united with this latter building by a lofty corridor. The Library was quite exceptionally rich in local literature; the Art Gallery contained a magnificent collection of pictures, most of them by local artists; and the Museum itself, which, fifty years before, could boast one of the best collections of shells and reptiles in the country, had won an equal reputation, in various other departments, its Roman antiquities being especially interesting and suggestive. In this vicinity, I noticed, too, a spacious People's Palace, built of glass, and bright with palms, with fountains, and with statuary. Here exhibitions, *fêtes*, and demonstrations were continally held; and here the populace could freely meet to smoke, and chat, and listen to delightful music as the hours went blithely by. There were Swimming Baths in every Ward, a Turkish Bath in Legh Street, and a score of pleasant bathing-places in the river. A splendid Theatre was also one of our municipal belongings, and "Our Town" had given to the world some famous actors and a crowd of clever plays.

A peep at Queen's Gardens—which reached

to Springfield Street—and then we passed into Winmarleigh Street (a hundred feet in width, and fringed with chestnut trees), and found ourselves, at last, in front of the great gates which were almost the earliest token of the resurrection of the town to loveliness. The Post Office had been set back, and so had the Club ; but the solid outlines of our beautiful Town Hall had not been interfered with, and the guardian angels—golden now—still hovered watchfully above the gates. The lawn was as green and velvety as ever, and, just in front of it, a splendid fountain played ; whilst round it rose titanic statues, some in marble, some in bronze ; some depicting incidents of classic fable, some seeking to immortalize the memory of more or less heroic men.

As we paused upon the steps, a lovely panorama met our eyes. The beautiful hills and woods of Cheshire lay like a delightful picture in the sunset, and between the town and them there rose a forest of masts and spars, and a host of mighty marts and manufactories. For, as I have hinted, Arpley, now, was practically one huge dock, and it was full of shipping, and round

about it clustered industries of which the town had never even heard in my poor days.

We passed into the grand old building, but the remembered ante-chamber, with its greatly elongated list of Mayors, and with a list of freemen which did real credit to the town (and to the freemen) was decorated in a style so beautiful as to make me wonder whether it could be the same place. And it led to a noble Council Chamber more than twice the size of the room, in which, of old, the thirty-six more or less incapables were wont to tediously wrangle over trifles, and to hurry "matters of great pith and moment" through at railway speed.

Immediately on entering, I saw a full length portrait of one whose face I knew at once, and underneath it read :

"JAMES FAIRCLOUGH,
JUBILEE MAYOR, 1894-5-6-7."

Another full length portrait bore the following inscription :

"JOHN FITCHETT MARSH,
THE FIRST TOWN CLERK, 1847—1858."

And another :

"WILLIAM BEAMONT,
THE FIRST MAYOR, 1847-8."

And there were various "counterfeit presentments" of citizens I did not know. The room was particularly well adapted for its purpose. The members, who were now in session, were seated in a comfortable semi-circle round the Mayor. The public were provided with accommodation on a raised and sloping dais, directly facing them, and were there in large numbers. The press could boast a comfortable dais of its own. The room was free from draught, and richly decorated, and softly lighted by great lamps which almost shamed the sunlight by their mellow glow. I likewise noticed some historic paintings, bearing on eventful epochs in the evolution of the town. I found that the Hall had practically been duplicated in the rear, a course which rendered any serious alteration in the architecture needless. The rooms above and below were used as entertaining or committee rooms, the whole of the municipal offices being centralized either here or in the big side buildings which were necessary to accommodate our

numerous departments, and the cluster of alert committees specially elected to control them. These additions had, however, carefully been kept in harmony with the main fabric, and distinctly tended to enhance its stateliness.

But what pleased me more than the immense improvement which I noticed in the Council Chamber was the improvement in the *personnel* and the demeanour of the Council. Everybody used to speak at once, and nobody to listen. Anyone who tried to make a rational appeal to their intelligence, or to shake the solid fabric of their prejudice, was usually shouted down by his good-natured fellow-Councillors, or had to bow—not always mutely—to the inexorable hammer of the Mayor. The principal object which nearly everybody had appeared to be to rush through the business, and get to the Clubs to end it there, unless, indeed, it happened to be a question of expending an extra pound or two on some one's salary, when they would wrangle on the subject half the night. There were not more than half a dozen who could make a decent speech, and the monthly meetings frequently resembled comic opera rather than the grave deliberations of a

responsible body of public men. But evidently we had "changed all that." The number of representatives had been increased considerably, for the town had greatly grown in area and population; there were numerous new wards, identical, in many cases, with the villages which had been gradually brought within the borough; and the life of the whole neighbourhood was practically one with that of the municipality. But nobody spoke unless he had something to say, and everybody listened quietly. No attempt was made to violate the Standing Orders, and nobody disputed the ruling of the Chair, which appeared to me to be absolutely impartial and judicious.

"Who is the Mayor?" I asked.

"Sir Gilbert Greenall," he replied, "the third of that name, or Lord Walton, I should say. He has recently received the honour of a Life Peerage for the generous way in which he met the Corporation in their wish to purchase Walton Hall, with its great park and lovely reservoirs, in order to commemorate the Borough Centenary. It is a sort of miniature Lake District, and embraces the best part of Daresbury,

" where the children's idol, dear old [1]'Lewis Carroll,' was himself a child."

" A Life Peerage, did you say ?"

" Yes ; we do not grant any other peerages now. Hereditary honours have gone out of fashion, and our Gilded Chamber represents the intellect and public spirit of the Empire, and not its acres and its cash !"

" Is the Empire really represented in it ?" I enquired with unfeigned interest.

" Of course it is," he said. " Imperial Federation started with the introduction of Colonial Life Peers. Colonial Members likewise sit in the Imperial House of Commons, for, when colonial blood had been so freely spilt and colonial treasure so freely voted in the imperial cause, the dullest 'little Englander' began to see that it was only fair that the Colonies should be consulted in the imperial policy."

" But you surely do not let the Colonies interfere in your home affairs ?" I asked.

1 Charles Lutwidge Dodgson ("Lewis Carroll") was born at Daresbury Parsonage, 27th January, 1832.

He smiled at me good-naturedly, and promptly said: "Not we! Ever so many years ago, we granted to each part of the United Kingdom power to deal with matters which related to itself alone, and we have throughout the Empire a great system which, beginning with the Parish Council, passes on through the Ward, and Borough, and City, and County, and National Councils, or Parliaments, right up to the Imperial Parliament itself. There has been much talk, of late, of a still grander union—

"The Parliament of man, the Federation of the world."

"With John Bull as Prime Minister?" I asked mischievously.

"Of course," he answered, with a laugh.

I said no more, but followed him from the great chamber, through the noble lines of statues, and past the spot where once Bank House obtruded its ungainly form upon a world which sighed to see it swallowed by an earthquake, and on towards the centre of the town, along the finest street which I had seen as yet The city on the Seine itself could scarcely boast a nobler thoroughfare, or point to nobler build-

ings or to more luxuriant trees. And when we came to Market Gate I positively held my breath with admiration. A spacious circus, perfectly symmetrical in shape, had succeeded the cramped and angular meeting-place of all the loafers of the town. Around it stood a ring of singularly graceful buildings. In the centre, a great bronze figure representing Warrington, and holding to the sky a lamp which shone like a moon in the clear air, rose mutely towards the stars—for night was falling now; immediately below it I could see the figure of a Roman warrior, gazing eagerly towards *Veratinum;* a Norman baron, on the eastern side, peered searchingly towards *Mote* Hill; upon the north, a comely Cavalier looked out towards Winwick for grim Cromwell's conquering force; and, on the west, a sturdy "Blueback" watched intently for the expected coming of the French. Medallions of grave old Friar *Penker*, of the famous Dr. Priestley, of the gifted Mrs. Barbauld, and of other well-known Warringtonians lent added interest and significance to this great local monument, whilst from its granite base four crystal fountains streamed continually. About it I perceived the fleeting figures of the populace, who came and went

with happy faces and with sturdy tread ; and the delight with which, all day, I had observed them pulsed, to-night, within my veins like some delicious wine. I had met with many a stalwart soul in Roman camp, and Norman stronghold, and the dreamy home of "the black freyres" ; amid the cannonade of a beleaguering army, and the sunny atmosphere of learning and of song ; and, in every age, ay, even when

> "the iron wheels" went "onward,
> Grinding life down from its mark,"

I had been glad to claim relationship with such a race. But never had I seen such splendid specimens of English manhood as I saw to-day. Tall, sinewy, as straight as pine trees, and as strong as oaks, with health upon their foreheads and intelligence and honour in their eyes, my fellow-townsmen were Apollos in their grace and dignity, and might have stepped direct from some Athenian studio.

And what shall I say of the women ? I had marvelled at the wild grace of the island damsels who had won the stern hearts of the Roman soldiers, and had paid due homage to

the haughty matrons of the all-conquering realm; from mediæval doorways many an "apple-faced young English girl looked out on me with shining eyes"; I had seen "the light of love and mischief" kindle on the countenances of the prim, sweet Puritans, and add new witchery to the red-lipped daughters of the Cavaliers; I had reverently watched Miss Aikin in her ivied Alcove, and beheld Miss Bover, moving, like a flower, through Patten Lane; and, in my own epoch, I had met with some whose forms and faces might have borne comparison with those of any town or any age. [1]A budding lawyer had forgotten his dull lore to lovingly commemorate "The Warrington Beauties," and—poet as he was—he had not over-lauded them one whit. But all the unforgotten graces of the past were wonderfully mingled in these peerless damsels of a later time—their hearts and minds emanci-

1 Sir William David Evans, Knight, Recorder of Bombay, who was for some time a resident in the town as an articled clerk of Messrs. Turner and Kerfoot. His lines were written as an "Addition" to a poem called "The Warrington Beauties," by Messrs. Parr and Nowell, and both are still preserved in manuscript at the Museum. The latter is notable as containing the charming tribute to Miss Bover which I quoted in a previous chapter.

pated from the old conventionalities, their limbs no longer trammelled by the tyrannies of Fashion, and their faultless features perfectly compounded of the lily and the rose. And, as I gazed upon them with the worship which is due to Beauty everywhere, and half forgot the scenes around me as I gazed, a bell began to toll :

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight !

It was the curfew in the tower of Trinity, which dated from the Civil War, and for three hundred years had nightly rung the hour ; and, at the sound —so strange, yet so familiar—I started suddenly, as one who was awaking from a dream. A change was creeping over my surroundings. Once more the town was hidden in a golden haze. The streets contracted curiously. I looked in vain for any signs of trees and fountains, and, instead of all those gracious figures I had lately seen, my eyes fell ruefully upon the usual crowd of loungers, loitering on the narrow pavement talking of the latest football match, or idly gossiping with the police. Had I indeed been dreaming, then ? I had read how "Phra the Phœnician" had sunk, at intervals, into an age-long torpor, and come back to consciousness to share the life of many

a thrilling century in turn; but I could not think that his experience was the key to mine. I had heard of Mr. H. G. Wells's "Time Machine," and how, on that mysterious crystal car, he had been able to float forward into far futurity at his sweet will. But no such magic apparatus was at my disposal, and I was not bold enough to borrow his. Yes, I must have been dreaming. But how strangely real it all seemed, and with what pride it made me think of the old town, and with what radiant hopes it filled me for her future. And sometimes one's dreams come true!

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